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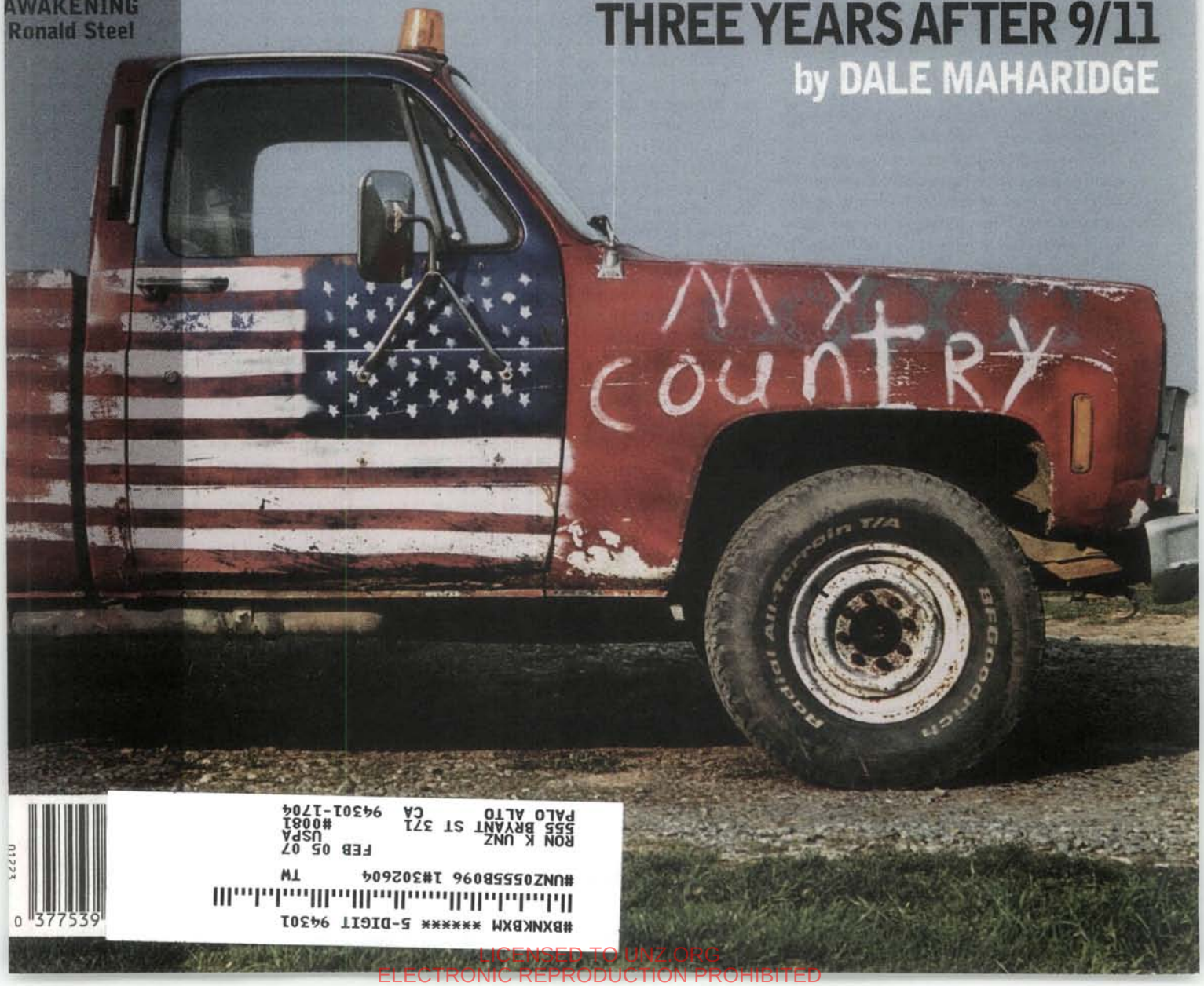
RUST & RAGE IN THE HEARTLAND

THREE YEARS AFTER 9/11

by DALE MAHARIDGE



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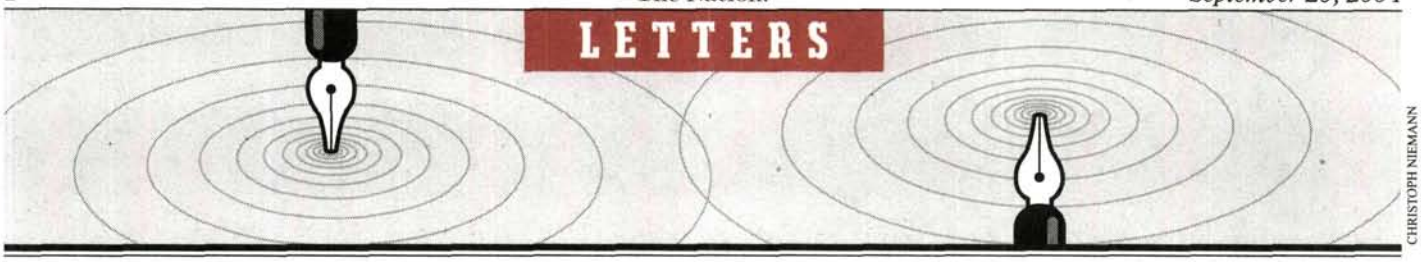

CHRISTOPH NIEMANN

SIZE DOESN'T MATTER...

Washington, DC

■ Katha Pollitt is right in her August 16/23 "Subject to Debate" column that small states have more electoral votes than they "should" according to a strict population count, owing to the constitutional malapportionment of the Senate. However, she overlooks the complicating factor that the population advantage to small states is largely canceled by the fact that all states, by law or custom, still award their Electoral College (EC) votes winner take all, which benefits large states. To wit, if a presidential candidate wins North Dakota by 537 votes this year, he gets three EC votes. But if the candidate wins Florida by that number, as Bush did (by the official tally) in 2000, he gets twenty-seven.

That is why Gore almost won the 2000 election, even as Bush carried thirty states, including most small states. Gore carried such large states as New York, California, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Wisconsin, Massachusetts and Michigan, with their big blocks of electoral votes, which brought him within one EC vote of victory.

Presidential candidates don't campaign in small or large states particularly anymore. You won't see either of them in Wyoming or New York this year. They campaign in close states, again owing to the winner-take-all feature of the Electoral College. West Virginia has only five electoral votes. But polls indicate that it is closely divided, and its votes could be decisive. So you will find Bush and Kerry there, plenty.

Historically, the winner-take-all feature benefited Democrats, because if they were going to win at all, they would win in the big Northeastern and Midwestern "industrial" states. But now conservative big states like Georgia and Texas are gaining people and EC votes and the old industrial states are losing them, which will help the GOP, unless the Democrats can break the Republican hold on the Sun Belt. In any case, by these strange balancing anomalies, the EC vote count still usually agrees with the popular vote. The 2000 EC vote did not. But it should be noted that the popular vote was also essentially a tie in 2000 and thus that either result in the EC would have been regarded as unfair by the losers. But Pollitt is right that misguided small states continue to love the Electoral College, and thus that it is likely to be with us forever. PETER CONNOLLY

KUSH & BERRY?

Vancouver, BC

■ True to form, Naomi Klein provides a refreshing perspective when she points out the fundamental similarity between Bush and Kerry ["Lookout," Aug 16/23]. She also deserves props for developing a thought-provoking scenario whereby the left under a Kerry administration becomes more receptive to systemic analysis. But I take a more pessimistic view.

Klein points out that a majority of *Nation* readers are loath to see Kerry and Bush merely as different chapters in the same book. Where we differ is that she believes this will change if Kerry is elected. But American voters' capacity for self-delusion will not diminish after the election. It is as easy to delude yourself about what a President is doing as to delude yourself about what a candidate will do if elected. In this instance, the capacity for delusion is strengthened as it becomes a self-defense measure.

The fact is that antiwar activists are campaigning for a candidate who is promising to escalate the war, in part because of the Bush blindness Klein describes. Therefore, if Kerry is elected, and fulfills his promises, which I predict will involve an application of the Chechen solution to Iraq, antiwar Kerry voters will have no recourse to the "he misled us" argument to justify their vote. The record will be unambiguous, and Kerry will be clearly fulfilling his mandate. Faced with this, antiwar Kerry voters will have two choices: Accept the truth and their own complicity in the atrocities that will continue in Iraq for years to come or protect their conscience and deny reality by maintaining that Kerry's actions in Iraq somehow represent a progressive break from Bush, and that it is all Bush's fault anyway for getting Kerry stuck in Iraq in the first place.

I predict, against my hopes, that a large percentage of the left, Michael Moore included, would choose the latter, thereby sealing their complicity with the war. If this all comes to pass, it will constitute a disaster for the left, not only by creating deep internal divisions, but by revealing an intellectual and moral bankruptcy from which it will be difficult to recover. Such are the dangers of opportunism and lowest-common-denominator politics. THOMAS BAKER

AMERICAN APPAREL & UNITE

In "SweatX Closes Up Shop" [July 19/26], Peter Dreier and Richard Appelbaum stated that because of a "vicious intimidation effort" directed against UNITE and employees supporting that union, Los Angeles–based American Apparel was required to enter into a settlement agreement by the National Labor Relations Board. American Apparel's settlement was voluntary and contains no admission of wrongdoing. American Apparel further responds:

Los Angeles

■ American Apparel never engaged in any anti-union campaign, let alone one involving "vicious intimidation." This can be verified by our workers employed during UNITE's September 2003 membership drive. We have always supported our workers' fundamental civil right to unionize or be free of a union.

The union was trying to politically force American Apparel into embracing it, regardless of worker interest. They claimed they would make us their poster child and help us obtain financial support if we cooperated. We refused to go along with this conspiracy against our work force and the public.

On the strong advice of antisweatshop advocates in Los Angeles, we offered UNITE an election—even when the union had not demonstrated the proper show of interest required by federal law for an official election. The union refused. The antiunion sentiment at American Apparel stemmed from a grassroots effort by workers themselves, who realized that the union was attempting to use them and the company to gain a California foothold. The workers were infuriated when they learned: (1) the union falsely stated that I personally endorsed their effort; (2) the union failed to inform them about dues; (3) of UNITE's long history of corruption and nearly empty California membership.

Workers organized other workers to write letters to the union, sign a petition and demonstrate against the union in front of our building, demanding that they did not want to be represented by UNITE. Shamed by its unpopularity, UNITE manufactured charges against the company to generate publicity.

We settled the charges on the advice of the NLRB, which highly discouraged litigation in a letter claiming it would be "costly and time consuming." Under the terms of the settlement, we put up posters and made announcements assuring that workers had the right to unionize without company interference.

For a century, unions have argued that worker well-being is good business. We have made this principle a central tenet of our company. With more than 2,000 employees, our factory is now the largest cut-and-sew facility in the United States. Our garment workers are some of the highest paid in the world, some earning as much as $18 an hour (versus the less than $0.25 sweatshop workers often earn). Ironically, because we refuse to outsource to factories domestically or internationally, our company is one of the most "unionizable" operations in our industry. Our workers have access to affordable healthcare, paid time off and other benefits. Our formula is simple: We make products that improve people's lives, both those buying and those making them.

Years ago, Dreier asked that I embrace

(Continued on Page 28)

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EDITORIALS

The GOP Hijacks 9/11

More than a thousand days have passed since September 11, 2001, yet the wounds are still raw. In recent newspaper pictures, grief was still evident in the faces of relatives of those who died in the terrorist attacks as they listened to Congressional testimony about 9/11 intelligence failures.

All the more reason, then, that the Republican Party should avoid using the attacks as a political prop. Yet that is precisely what happened at its national convention. Any uncertainty about whether the Bush/Cheney 2004 campaign would exploit the memory of the victims of 9/11 disappeared on the convention's first night, when former New York City Mayor Rudy Giuliani went so far as to argue that Bush should be re-elected in order to honor the dead. "We owe that much and more to the loved ones and heroes we lost on September 11," the possible future presidential candidate said as a backdrop of the New York skyline appeared behind him.

If Giuliani's exploitation of 9/11 was profoundly distasteful—and roundly condemned as such by family members of the dead—Senator John McCain was subtler but no less exploitative when he suggested that the invasion of Iraq should be seen as a part of the response to 9/11. Never mind that there is no evidence of a link between Saddam Hussein and Al Qaeda; McCain argued that the war in Iraq and the "war on terrorism" are one. And never mind that there can be no war on terrorism, since terrorism involves a *tactic*, not an organization or state; McCain argues that "only the most deluded of us could doubt the necessity of this war."

Was this all just convention rhetoric? No way. The Republicans are using 9/11 because they know that angry and fearful citizens will put rational thought aside to follow a leader who stirs their blood. Giuliani and McCain were trying out themes for the fall campaign.

This is a dangerous game, however, not just a despicable political tactic. As Dale Maharidge reports on page 11, after spending more than two years crisscrossing the heartland, he finds that the 9/11 appeals tap into a growing fury over conditions that seem incapable of being righted but have nothing to do with terrorism. Maharidge writes, "The 9/11 attacks were not solely the genesis but an amplifier of pre-existing tensions—rooted in the radically transformed American economy, from a manufacturing dynamo to that of millions of jobs of the Wal-Mart variety." With at least 1 million fewer jobs than when George W. Bush took office and with more than 35 million Americans living in poverty and 45 million without health insurance, millions of American workers are living in a 2004 version of the Depression. Some—not many, but a growing number—are ready to blame Muslims or Arabs or whoever else can be pointed to as the cause of their problems.

Bush may have spoken more accurately than he knew (though he later claimed he'd been misunderstood) about the "war on terror" when he said in an interview broadcast on the convention's opening day, "I don't think you can win it. But I think you can create conditions so that those who use terror as a tool are less acceptable in parts of the world." Rather than criticizing the President for what they are calling a defeatist statement, the Kerry campaign and other Democrats should welcome his comment as a sign that Bush, albeit belatedly, is learning the art of nuance.

What this country needs between now and November 2 is not a debate over who will be a better "war President." We need a debate over how to extricate America from Iraq, and how to attack the demons of poverty, joblessness and sickness that threaten so many Americans every day. Jingoism and fearmongering are cheap ways to avoid hard issues.

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COMMENT

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Defying Convention

In the days leading up to the protests against the Republican National Convention, the specter of possible violence by radicals fueled much of the media coverage of the activists. Fox News made every effort to conflate dissenters with terrorism, not by reporting terrorism by protesters—since there wasn't any—but by constantly juxtaposing the words "protest" and "terrorists." The *New York Post* even reported that the Weather Underground, a group with less relevance these days than the Jefferson Starship, was plotting a comeback.

The hysteria wasn't limited to the far-right Murdoch media. The *New York Times* reported that a "shadowy group" was coming to town—hoodlums known for "throwing rocks." The *Daily News* warned of ANARCHISTS HOT FOR MAYHEM. Former 1960s radicals joined the chorus, fretting over the possibility that if the RNC protests got rowdy, Middle America, fearing anarchy and chaos, would vote Republican in droves, "just like in 1968."

Let's cut to reality, shall we? On Sunday, August 29, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) led half a million people in a peaceful march through Manhattan past Madison Square Garden, where the Republicans would convene the next day. Many were mainstream and patriotic. (One sign read, OUR FLAG SHOULD STAND FOR PRIDE, NOT ARROGANCE.) Although the whole gamut of liberal-left cultural and ideological tendencies was on display, the marchers were united in their opposition to George W. Bush and his right-wing agenda. Police were mellow. Like everybody else, they mostly sipped sodas, enjoyed the spectacle and tried to stay cool. (There were about 200 arrests, but most of them were away from the main march.)

Although the city had denied UFPJ a permit to rally in Central Park, citing the need to protect the grass, many protesters gathered there anyway after the legal march downtown. Despite fears that that gathering would be confrontational, it was, literally, a walk in the park, as demonstrators lounged on the much-venerated grass and recovered from the day's rousing exercise of constitutional freedoms and talked quietly among themselves.

Certainly, some of the negative pre-publicity helped get the word out about the event. But tales of anarchists bent on violence surely kept many away who might otherwise have attended. As Naomi Klein pointed out in several radio interviews, Todd Gitlin and others, riding the 1968 analogy, handed well-meaning New Yorkers a "get out of the protest free" card, and that's unfortunate.

United for Peace and Justice deserves a peace prize of sorts for organizing such a smooth event. The police and the city deserve some share of that praise, but with plenty of caveats. Rallies are usually the least exciting part of mass marches, but even though this march was undoubtedly more inspiring and more fun without a gasfest afterward, the city should not have prevented the rally. Of more than 1,700 arrests through the third day of the convention, some were deserved (a crew of knuckleheads who purposely set a dragon puppet on fire during the march, for example). But many people were targeted by police for reasons unclear. Bicycling demonstrators, obviously nonviolent, accounted for many of the arrests. On Tuesday, 1,187 people were arrested, many of whom

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were simply standing on the sidewalk protesting. Across the street from Ground Zero, 200 quiet, peaceful demonstrators, led by the War Resisters League, were trapped by police in a huge orange net. Those arrested were charged, absurdly, with "obstructing governmental administration," although earlier that day the Mayor himself had given them permission to march on the sidewalk. "They are just people off the streets wholesale," said UFPJ's Bill Dobbs. "It's very unprofessional."

Many RNC protesters, according to Simone Levine of the National Lawyers Guild, were being held well over the legal limit of twenty-four hours. "The goal is to keep people off the streets," Dobbs explained. Many were denied the right to counsel, and Pier 57, where many protesters were held, has asbestos and fire-safety problems. Some of those detained said the floor of the former bus terminal was a virtual oil slick; they had to sleep on the floor, and some emerged with serious chemical burns.

Throughout the week, people engaged in acts of civil disobedience, although it was not always evident what tactical purpose it served. "There is no one right way to demonstrate, and the incredible diversity of protests this week is exciting," said Alex Vitale, an activist and sociologist who works with several direct-action groups, speaking on Saturday before most protests began. "But what concerns me is that these tactics don't necessarily embody any specific policy. It is not clear what is the point."

Sometimes the point was simply the right to dissent, and some did so with a clear critique of Bush policy. As veteran civil liberties lawyers pointed out all week, the best way to fight for our liberties is to exercise them, lawfully and unlawfully. That's why when the city denied permits to some groups, including the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign and the Still We Rise Coalition, both representing poor people, they marched anyway, with dignity and discipline, tightly focused on a message of economic justice. After the Tuesday arrests at Ground Zero, about fifty protesters marched from the site reading the First Amendment aloud, then staged a "die in" at 28th Street and Broadway.

After all the hysteria about those on the fringes, RNC week made it clear we wouldn't have resistance movements without them. The clean-cut middle class showed up to protest, but the activists and artists of the left made sure those good citizens had someplace to go—and that they were entertained. Spectacles included Billionaires for Bush playing croquet in Central Park's no-speech zone and the Pink Bloque, a Chicago-based radical feminist dance troupe blasting Janet Jackson and breaking into a routine when the march stalled in the hot sun. It's worth remembering that whether they're anarchists (in the A31 coalition, which organized many of the direct actions) or socialists (like many in the UFPJ leadership), often it is radicals who most effectively defend the mainstream values of America: values like democracy, free speech and inclusion. At Sunday's march, a lively band of communists, entirely young people of color, wore red T-shirts and waved red flags. They chanted, "We are 'the people' too!"

LIZA FEATHERSTONE

This article draws on reporting by Eyal Press, Esther Kaplan and Katha Pollitt. See their contributions and others on The Nation*'s RNC protest weblog,* New York Minutes, *at www.thenation.com.*

Gay GOPers Crash Party

Being a gay or lesbian Republican isn't easy. Social conservatives condemn your "homosexual lifestyle," while your friends (and lovers) on the left see you as part of the antigay problem. At the Republican National Convention, the Log Cabin Republicans, the GOP's largest gay and lesbian group, is working to resolve this tension by making the party more inclusive, along with fellow moderate groups Republicans for Choice and the Republican Youth Majority. The groups hoped that since the RNC was granting prime-time speaking slots to such socially moderate voices as Arnold Schwarzenegger and Rudy Giuliani, it might be possible to reflect a wider view on abortion and LGBT rights in the party's platform.

Wishful thinking. Even as the Bush-backed Federal Marriage Amendment to the Constitution tanked in the Senate and Vice President Cheney voiced his disapproval of such federal meddling in marriage, the platform committee wasn't playing gay ball. On August 26 the committee approved a platform that not only calls for a gay-marriage-banning amendment but also condemns civil unions and any legal recognition for same-sex partners.

"The platform is getting, quite frankly, worse and worse—it's offensive," said Jeff Bissiri, an LCR member and convention delegate. "As a concept our platform should be about a page long so as many people as possible can look at it and say, 'Yeah, I'm a Republican.'"

The LCR ruled out a floor fight at the convention (where there are anywhere from forty to sixty openly gay delegates) in favor of running a TV ad featuring Ronald Reagan's farewell address at the 1992 convention, where he said he hoped he appealed "to your best hopes, not your worst fears." The ad closes with images of the Rev. Fred Phelps holding a GOD HATES FAGS sign at Matthew Shepard's funeral and asks party faithful if they would choose inclusion or Phelps's way. "The choice is clear," the ad's tag line reads. (CNN refused to air the spot, deeming it "too controversial.")

In April the Log Cabin Republicans held their own national convention in Palm Springs, where more than 300 participants debated the organization's presidential endorsement. Rebecca Maestri, Virginia chapter president and one of the "Austin 12," a group of gay Republicans who met then-candidate Bush in 2000, said she hadn't decided how she would vote. "This has been gut-wrenching," she explained of the President's decision to support the gay-marriage ban. "When the President came out and announced his support for the constitutional amendment I felt in a very similar fashion as I felt watching the '92 convention, when Pat Buchanan hijacked my party." Maestri estimated that a third of her state organization's membership are supportive of Bush's re-election bid, a third are opposed and a third are "still gazing at their belly button trying to decide which way to go."

The Reagan ad isn't LCR's first television foray. The group came out swinging against the marriage amendment earlier this year, launching a million-dollar ad campaign using quotes from Cheney in 2000 when he first indicated he thought the Feds should stay out of the marriage business. These ads, which

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COMMENT

do not mention the President or the election, have run in at least twelve states and have been partially bankrolled by former California Congressman Michael Huffington, who told the crowd in Palm Springs, "If we are going to be taken for granted, we have no voice to speak of."

Pre-eminent gay conservative Andrew Sullivan argued at the LCR convention that it would be a big mistake to cede the party to the religious right. "I'm getting tired of people saying life would be a lot easier if you would sit there as a Democrat and smugly tell everybody they're deluded." Log Cabin Republicans say Democrats shouldn't be smug anyway, since John Kerry's position on same-sex marriage isn't all that inclusive. Kerry (like Cheney) is against limiting marriage at the federal level but supports a state constitutional amendment in Massachusetts that would ban same-sex marriage, a move that helped slide the issue through the state legislature and has paved the way for an ugly statewide referendum in 2006. Trolling for socially conservative votes in the Midwest, Kerry supported a voter-approved gay-marriage ban in Missouri, which was passed overwhelmingly August 3 and sets the stage for similar votes in a dozen other states in coming months. "I mean, who are we kidding here?" asked one Log Cabin member, who plans to vote for Bush because of his global AIDS plan.

Like a good conservative, LCR co-founder and California alternate GOP delegate Frank Ricchiazzi takes a broader view of the problem. Ricchiazzi has seen ugly battles before, most notably the 1978 Briggs Initiative in California, which would have banned gays from teaching in public schools but failed miserably after it was denounced by prominent Republicans, including Reagan. Bush's campaign is now finding that the Administration has not only alienated a million gay and lesbian Bush voters from 2000 (as many as 60,000 in Florida alone), it has set off a debate among secular conservatives from Alan Simpson to David Brooks at a time when every Republican has to be on the same page. It's a debate that the LCR warns could get ugly. "If we don't speak out, we're going to have the continued exclusion of people in the democratic process in the Republican Party," Ricchiazzi said. "These people don't want us in their party, because we expose them to what they really want, and what they really want is a theocracy."

CHRISTOPHER LISOTTA

Christopher Lisotta, the broadcast network reporter for Television Week, *also writes for* The Advocate *and* LA Weekly.

ON THE WEB

If the young and the hip don't get out to vote in November, it won't be because no one told them to. Assistant literary editor Hillary Frey reports on *Future Soundtrack of America*, a new CD designed to energize young voters and raise money for progressive groups like MoveOn .org, Music for America and Common Assets. Katherine Reilly interviews Princeton philosopher Peter Singer about his new book on George W. Bush's ethics. All at www.thenation.com.

GIVING CREDIT...

We neglected to note in the September 13 Republican Convention Issue that Jesse Gordon and Knickerbocker were responsible for the centerfold map titled "A New York Safari for Republicans."

Poverty in the Suburbs

Hidden in a Census Bureau report on poverty released in late August is a factoid with significant political and social consequences. Poverty has moved to the suburbs. Or, more accurately, poverty has expanded to the suburbs. Today, 13.8 million poor Americans live in the suburbs—almost as many as the 14.6 million who live in central cities. The suburban poor represent 38.5 percent of the nation's poor, compared with 40.6 percent of the total who live in central cities.

The headlines about the Census report focused on the increase in overall poverty—from 11.3 percent of all Americans in 2000, a twenty-six-year low, to 12.5 percent in 2003. In the last year alone, 1.3 million people fell below the poverty line, bringing the total to to 35.9 million.

This increase in poverty—along with a significant uptick in the number of Americans without health insurance (15.6 percent of the population)—is surely bad news for George W. Bush, who has been claiming that the economy is improving. The suburbanization of poverty also changes the demographics of elections in ways that are not yet determined but that could result in long-term Democratic growth.

Both the number and proportion of the poor living in suburbs has increased steadily. In 1970 only 20.5 percent of the nation's poor lived in suburbs. By 2000, that had grown to 35.9 percent. And those trends have continued.

After World War II, moving to the suburbs was a key component of the American Dream of upward mobility. Indeed, the proportion of Americans who live in suburbs has grown steadily, from 23 percent in 1950 to 50 percent in 2000. The 2000 presidential election was the first with a majority of suburban voters. The 1950s TV image of suburbia—shows like *Leave It to Beaver*, *My Three Sons* and *The Donna Reed Show*—reflected reality: Suburbs were lily white and middle class. Men commuted to the city to work. Mothers stayed at home with the kids or worked part time.

The suburban landscape today has changed. More suburbanites now commute to other suburbs than to cities. A growing number of blacks, Latinos and Asians now live in suburbia, although suburbs are still racially segregated. Similarly, the poor are not randomly scattered across the suburban landscape; they are concentrated in inner-ring suburbs close to cities, as well as in the suburban fringe—former rural towns swept up by suburban sprawl.

Like the rest of America, the suburbs are becoming more and more polarized by income. During the past two decades, the number of "poor" suburbs—those whose per capita income is

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less than three-quarters of the metropolitan area's—has spiraled upward. Most of their residents are not poor, but neither are they well-off. At the same time, the number of "rich" suburbs—those with per capita incomes above 125 percent of the region's—has also increased. Rich suburbs use "snob zoning" to exclude poor households (and, increasingly, middle-class families) by zoning out apartments and requiring minimum-lot sizes for large, single-family houses. Meanwhile, the number of middle-class suburbs has declined.

For the poor, in particular, living in suburbia is a mixed bag at best. Research on a federal program that provides the inner-city poor with housing vouchers to move to middle-class suburbs shows that adults get better jobs and kids do better in school. But few of the suburban poor live in such affluent suburbs or attend good schools. Most live in troubled communities beset with problems once associated with big cities: crime, hunger, homelessness, inadequate schools and public services, and chronic fiscal crises.

Especially in the suburbs, where the explosion of low-paying jobs in the service economy is most evident, the poor are the "working poor." Because most suburbs lack decent public transportation, they have a harder time getting to work. Few of the suburban poor have health insurance. There are fewer doctors and health clinics in suburbia that accept Medicaid patients and fewer social services. Few suburbs have any subsidized housing, so poor residents often wind up paying half or more of their incomes just to keep a roof over their heads. Many federal anti-poverty programs are targeted to cities, leaving the suburban poor in the lurch (the earned-income tax credit is an important exception). And fiscally troubled suburbs have even fewer taxable resources than big cities to provide money to address the needs of the poor.

The problems facing the troubled suburbs are due in part to the growing fragmentation of our metropolitan areas. Suburbs engage in bidding wars—with each other and with big cities—to attract stores, malls and jobs, undermining the fiscal health of them all. They are also the result of "leapfrog" development: As the affluent move to upscale enclaves, they bring expensive shopping malls with them, leaving behind older retail districts and abandoned industrial parks. The older housing stock in the troubled suburbs—built in the 1950s and '60s—now requires substantial repairs but many residents can't afford them, and many banks won't make loans anyway—a new kind of "redlining."

Although the suburban poor include transplanted city dwellers and newly arrived immigrants, many are home-grown. Among them are families who were once middle class—or the children of the middle class—who can now barely stay afloat in the new economy. They often feel trapped: They can't afford to move to more affluent areas because their incomes are stagnating or declining, their jobs are increasingly insecure and their public schools, libraries and parks are chronically underfunded. They are more likely to buy their clothes at Wal-Mart than at Nordstrom. Many cannot afford to pay for college, as tuitions rise and government scholarships are cut.

For most of the twentieth century, America's suburbs were overwhelmingly Republican, while the big cities were Democrat territory. Today, there is no monolithic suburban vote. Suburbanites are up for grabs politically, because they are now a mirror of the larger society. The largest block of "swing voters"—and most of the swing Congressional districts—are in the suburbs. In 2000, Al Gore and George Bush each won about half the suburban vote. Bush won the majority of suburban men, while Gore captured most of the women.

For the Democrats, these trends present opportunities to recruit new voters but also problems in reaching them. As urban problems have spread to suburbia—especially the lack of health insurance, the shortage of affordable housing, job insecurity and falling incomes—as well as traditional suburban woes like traffic congestion and sprawl, middle-class voters may be more receptive to Democratic approaches that require a more active government. Democrats need to offset Republican appeals to white fears and resentments about the increase of immigrants and blacks in suburban schools and nearby neighborhoods.

While Democrats have a track record of mobilizing the urban poor through unions, civil rights and community groups and inner-city churches, they have limited experience mobilizing the suburban poor and near-poor, who are less likely to be union members or members of community organizations. Unions and progressive community-organizing groups like ACORN, the Industrial Areas Foundation and the Gamaliel Network are just beginning to reach out to the suburban poor.

The latest Census data remind us that stereotypes about the "inner-city poor" and the "suburban middle class" no longer reflect how we live. As we revise our old images of suburbia, America must change its public policies to acknowledge suburban poverty, and the Democratic Party must change its strategies to reach those with good reasons to like what it has to offer.

PETER DREIER

Peter Dreier, E.P. Clapp Distinguished Professor of Politics and director of the Urban and Environmental Policy program at Occidental College, is the co-author of The Next Los Angeles: The Struggle for a Livable City, *forthcoming in October.*

Will Labor Come Back?

Labor Day has never been a very inspiring holiday, established as it was by late-nineteenth-century union bosses as a home-grown alternative to May Day, which was viewed as having uncomfortably leftist, European associations. American workers today, of course, would love to have the healthcare, organizing rights and vacations enjoyed by their counterparts in most of Europe, thanks to the "radical" labor organizing traditions on that side of the Atlantic. The Bush Administration is moving in the opposite direction, although there are some hopeful signs that labor's fighting back.

Celebrating the holiday early, in August the Bush White House and its rich friends no doubt toasted new regulations that will deprive up to 6 million additional American workers of overtime, defined as time-and-a-half pay for working more than forty hours a week. Even more disturbing, in June the Administration's

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COMMENT

National Labor Relations Board quietly moved to "review" the legitimacy of the card-check procedure, by which an employer recognizes a union when presented with cards signed by more than half of the shop's employees. The labor board has upheld card check many times since the 1930s, when the procedure was first established. Repealing it would effectively deprive countless Americans of the right to organize and put an immediate halt to many of labor's most promising campaigns.

The Bush Administration might have enjoyed a champagne toast to another recent victory over workers, also engineered by its NLRB. In July the agency declared that graduate students do not have the right to organize and that under federal law they are not employees, thus abruptly reversing a legal precedent set by several earlier decisions. The decision fell sharply along party lines: The three judges voting for it were Republicans; the two dissenters were Democrats. Presidential hopeful John Kerry, meanwhile, has firmly opposed the Bush Administration on overtime as well as card check, even co-sponsoring the Employee Free Choice Act, which would require an employer to recognize a union when 50 percent of its workers sign cards. At present, recognition is up to the employer, so if enacted this bill would hugely improve workers' chances of organizing.

These issues alone—and of course there are many more—are reason enough to applaud unions' vigorous contribution to the defeat of George W. Bush, which has unified and energized the rank and file more effectively than anything in years. Many new organizations working to defeat Bush have strong ties to unions, including Grassroots Democrats and Voices for Working Families. Labor is also one of the major sponsors of America Coming Together (ACT), one of the year's most dynamic 527s, devoted to mobilizing voters in seventeen swing states. With more than 1,400 paid canvassers and numerous volunteers, ACT aims to make 17 million "contacts" with swing and base voters before November. More than 50,000 SEIU members knock on doors and make phone calls for Kerry. At least 2,000 of them have taken time off from work to do so. SEIU has put some $65 million into the effort to defeat Bush, while AFSCME has contributed another $48 million.

At the same time, it's increasingly clear that for unions to make significant advances—to grow in numbers and influence, rather than just deflect right-wing assaults and accept their diminished social and political relevance—they must also think outside the Democratic Party. The *Washington Post* recently quoted SEIU president Andrew Stern's calling it a "hollow party," lacking new ideas. Stern reportedly suggested that efforts to reform both the party and the labor movement could be damaged by a Kerry victory, sparking a furious outcry. Without specifically retracting any of those comments, Stern later, on his blog, clarified that he was "100% behind Kerry" and that he had meant that he hopes the labor movement, once Kerry wins, doesn't "lose energy and unity." Stern was right in both instances: If labor's anti-Bush momentum could, post-November, be channeled into fighting for healthcare and organizing workers for the next four years—rather than dissipating under a Kerry administration—the movement would find itself much stronger.

Labor leaders are also grappling more openly with systemic problems, like the Wal-Martization of the economy—the growth in low-wage jobs offering few benefits and little promise of advancement. And at SEIU's convention this summer, Stern implicitly acknowledged labor's political weakness and blasted the AFL-CIO, calling for unions to work together to change the organization's direction or build a new institution that can do a better job of fighting for workers.

Stern is part of the New Unity Partnership, a group of labor leaders recommending, among other changes, that unions work together to form bigger, more powerful organizations and run bigger campaigns. Indeed, the NUP unions are already reorganizing themselves in significant ways. Major labor unions—SEIU and the newly merged UNITE HERE—have joined forces to organize Sodexho, a dining services provider notorious for unionbusting and race discrimination. Stern also announced a $1 million commitment to coordinate local and national efforts to fight Wal-Mart's antiworker abuses—badly needed, as Wal-Mart's operations are highly centralized, while most people fighting it have never heard of one another.

But any successful revamping of labor strategy should also take heed of the vibrant small-scale and local organizing going on outside traditional unions: Immigrant workers nationwide, and black workers in the South—long hampered from organizing by "right to work" laws and by racism in traditional unions—have been organizing through worker centers, building power in their communities as well as on the shop floor.

These are the bright spots. But the fact that Bush became President at all, and that his heinous policies are even considered, much less enacted, is a testament to labor's lack of power. Even within the Democratic Party, labor's influence has waned; recall that in 1980, the party's platform called for "full employment" and a "universal national health insurance plan." (To hear a politician use such language today, you would have to travel to Europe, Venezuela or Cuba.) Business interests have engaged in long-term political planning for decades, so it is no wonder their needs, and theirs alone, are reflected in current policy. Can labor do the same? If so, perhaps someday Labor Day, despite its history, won't seem like such a sham. LIZA FEATHERSTONE

Liza Featherstone, a Nation *contributing editor, is the author of* Selling Women Short: The Landmark Battle for Workers' Rights at Wal-Mart.

CALVIN TRILLIN

A Suggestion as America Begins Preparations for The Next Olympics

We might provoke less violent demonstrations
If we invaded slightly fewer nations.

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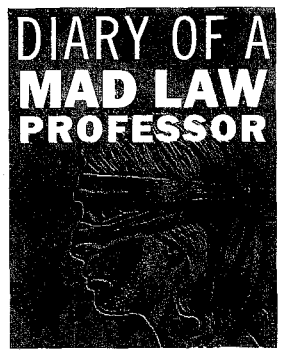
PATRICIA J. WILLIAMS

Economic Bad Boys



When the "scrawny boy from Austria" delivered his peroration against faint-hearted "economic girlie men," it was an unusually seductive, even witty, appeal to a notion of free enterprise that is not just flexible but musclebound, not just robust but smackdown and not just strong but hypersteroidal. But the American free enterprise system, particularly since the Depression, has always rested on an assumption that the marketplace would be bounded by notions of fairness, reasonableness, rationality as well as efficiency. Recently, libertarian clichés and Republican oversimplifications seem to have left many people with the impression that commerce should be utterly unbounded by any kind of regulation whatsoever. This kind of thinking is littered with references to survival of the fittest, dogs eating dogs and snarling consumption of large quantities of red meat still bloody enough to spatter impressively.

But the government's role used to mean insuring that the market was free of transactions posing great risks to life, limb or cultural capital. In such ideal circumstances, parties might bargain as wisely or foolishly as they please as long as they are capable actors, the terms are reasonable rather than unconscionable and no undue force, either public or private, is brought to bear. Where such circumstances did not exist, it was understood that public willingness to participate in the market would be affected and that participants could not be pacified by monetary damages alone but might rather be motivated by pain, fear, vengeance or fury.

Two things have happened in the years it has taken to convert Arnold Schwarzenegger into a political philosopher. One is that the pricing of risk has overtaken all other categories of analysis. From the high-flying executives at Enron to the mercenary soldiers of Executive Outcomes, every jot of daily life, from the highest ideal to the most basic principle, seems to have its price tag. Our political discourse is configured much more by models of *hasta la vista baby* commercialism than guided by civil libertarian or humanitarian ethics. The second thing that has happened is that the notion of the state as a monopoly of power has been under attack by antigovernment ideologues, who think the only function of government is policing a narrow range of business interests. This has resulted in broad suspicion of the judiciary as well as Congress, and an increased tendency to reduce the executive function to that of a military-minded CEO. But the degree to which this theoretical decentralization of government power also results in an unchecked aggregation of corporate power is ironic.

I guess I bother to go through this rather academic rendition because I worry that the notion of free enterprise driving the he-man model of capitalism is dangerously flawed. Let me give a bottom-line example of what's bothering me. A few months ago, National Public Radio's *Talk of the Nation* did a program about a Dutch physician working for Médecins Sans Frontières who was kidnapped and held for nearly two years in southern Russia. The Dutch government paid the ransom, but then sued Médecins Sans Frontières for reimbursement of about $1 million. The questions asked during the radio discussion were revealing: Did the Netherlands violate a presumably public policy principle of "not negotiating with terrorists"? Or was it simply lending Médecins Sans Frontières money under stress of a deadline, with the implicit assumption that it would be repaid? And what do corporations, if not governments, do when their employees are kidnapped?

In response to this last question, there was an interview with a man from an outfit called Corporate Risk, a service that handles the negotiation, delivery of ransom, coordination of law enforcement and communication with family. Callers seemed to relate to the mission of Corporate Risk. One listener described the world as a dangerous place generally; it was only natural to put a price on that danger. The guiding light for many seemed to be a corporation's—and ultimately a government's—willingness to absorb or dismiss beheading as the cost of doing business.

To me, there are a couple of fundamental moral mistakes here. The first is that governments, in their policy of "no negotiation" despite risk to human life, seem to be treating criminal or battlefield behavior as though it were an economic transaction—as though it were a usurious or extortive system of raising capital. Your money or your life, says the terrorist. No deal, says the wise, if short-lived, free marketeer. But if we view our bodies as beyond price, we might move heaven and earth to save a life—consider how different the Lindbergh case or the desperate negotiations for Daniel Pearl. Loss of life disorders much more than the marketplace, and that should guide our response. The second mistake is that private corporations are not really "undercutting" public policy—they are underwriting it. Politicians get to stand firm, while private companies hire desperately poor men from Nepal, Turkey, Bangladesh, to work in the line of fire—people whose lack of options become recast as "choice" or "freely assumed risk"—people whose lives are easily bought, and whose loss or injury is a transaction cost invisible to the voting public in powerful polities. In this model, neither the individual nor the state can lay claim to a value beyond price. Rather, the stock in the business enterprise itself is the prime interest to be protected.

Recently, Médecins Sans Frontières withdrew all its doctors from Afghanistan after the government there failed to investigate or prosecute the murderers of five of its doctors. As I flipped the dial through talk-radio rather farther to the right on the dial from NPR (I was driving from Boston to New York and could not identify all the voices or stations), I heard several discussions describing the decision as an unfortunate "cost of doing business," and that you can't "whine" if you put yourself "in harm's way."

The characterization of Médecins Sans Frontières, a neutral charitable organization operating in war zones around the world, as just another risk-calculating "business," is just one example of how much of what we used to think of as humanitarianism has been negotiated away in the politics of testosterone. ■

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ERIC ALTERMAN

'We Lie. We Decide.'

TIM RUSSERT: But, Senator, when you testified before the Senate, you talked about some of the hearings you had observed at the Winter Soldiers meeting, and you said that people had personally raped, cut off ears, cut off heads, taped wires from portable telephones to human genitals and on and on. A lot of those stories have been discredited, and in hindsight was your testimony...

JOHN KERRY: Actually, a lot of them have been documented.

TIM RUSSERT: So you stand by that?

—NBC's *Meet the Press*, April 18

Take a look at the exchange above and see if you can figure out what the hell is going on. Tim Russert is questioning John Kerry about his 1971 Senate testimony, in which Kerry recounted testimony he had heard of war crimes committed in Vietnam by US troops at the so-called Winter Soldier Investigation in January/February of that year. The fact that such crimes were committed by US troops is indisputable. My Lai happened. The *Toledo Blade* ran a Pulitzer Prize–winning exposé of the "Tiger Force" murders just days before Russert asked his question. As even Gen. Tommy Franks told an unhappy Sean Hannity, the "things Kerry said are undeniable." Indeed, Russert's question itself admitted this. For if only "a lot" of the atrocity stories were discredited, according to Russert, then at least some of them must be true. The entire exchange is therefore purposely pointless—both gratuitous and nonsensical—except as a means to try to embarrass Kerry for having had the courage to testify to uncomfortable truth more than thirty years earlier.

The exchange flashed again into my mind as I read that Russert—who, lest we forget, is one of the two or three most influential and respected journalists on network television—had reportedly told viewers that the dishonest and morally disgusting Swift Boat Veterans for Truth advertisements that have now been fully discredited had "scored a direct hit on one of the main bases for the Kerry campaign, his war record." It did not matter to this grand pooh-bah of the punditocracy that the ads were pure mendacity from start to finish. What mattered is that they were "effective." But why were they effective? Because Russert and his colleagues had not the wherewithal to point out that they were lies. "We are not judging the credibility of Kerry or the [Swift Boat] Veterans, we just print the facts," *Washington Post* executive editor Len Downie explains.

The group of liars and miscreants who make up Swift Boat Veterans for Truth were able to dominate the news and possibly turn the tide of the election despite offering false information against a decorated war hero, to support two war-avoiders who let others fight and die for a cause they professed to support, for two reasons. The first is the existence of an ideological movement that masquerades as a respectable segment of the media. This mass movement is dedicated to preserving power for the combination of wealthy corporate executives, religious fundamentalists and neoconservative ideologues who make up the Bush Administration's base, with little, if any, regard for the truth of its arguments. Its members include Fox News talking heads like Brit Hume, who said, "There's a thread here that one might trace through the criticisms of John Kerry and his behavior, even in this campaign, and that is the sense of somebody who is an absolutely incorrigible opportunist"; embittered Republican politicians turned pundits like Bob Dole, who claimed, "He's got himself into this wicket now where he can't extricate himself because not every one of these people can be Republican liars"; traitorous political operatives who masquerade as pundits, like Robert Novak, who termed the Swift Boat liars "the real patriots to rise to the surface this election year"; and is rounded out by Matt Drudge, the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, the *Washington Times* and other right-wing apparatchiks.

But, second, to point exclusively to the dishonest machinations of the right-wing media would be to miss the significance of the so-called liberal media (SCLM). Their willingness to treat scurrilous slander as mere "politics as usual" abdicates the most fundamental responsibility of journalism: to ascertain, as best as one can, just what the truth of a given situation may be. Christopher Hitchens, writing in *Slate*, gives almost perfect voice to this deliberately irresponsible SCLM tendency when he notes, "If Kerry doesn't like people disputing his own version of his own gallantry, then it was highly incautious of him to have made it the centerpiece of his appeal."

We must rely on Jon Stewart's fake news reports on *The Daily Show* to illustrate the point, as he and his bevy of crazed contributors continue to turn out comedy sketches that offer a truer picture than do the so-called journalists of the Sunday-morning gabfests and cable food fights. Here's their fake-take on the Swifties:

CORDDRY: I'm a reporter, Jon, and my job is to spend half the time repeating what one side says, and half the time repeating the other. Little thing called "objectivity"—might wanna look it up someday.

STEWART: Doesn't objectivity mean objectively weighing the evidence and calling out what's credible and what isn't?

CORDDRY: Whoa-ho! Well, well, well—sounds like someone wants the media to act as a filter! [*high-pitched, effeminate*] "Ooh, this allegation is spurious! Upon investigation this claim lacks any basis in reality! Mmm, mmm, mmm." Listen buddy: not my job to stand between the people talking to me and the people listening to me.

[...]

STEWART: So, basically, you're saying that this back-and-forth is never going to end.

CORDDRY: No, Jon—in fact a new group has emerged, this one composed of former Bush colleagues, challenging the President's activities during the Vietnam era. That group: Drunken Stateside Sons of Privilege for Plausible Deniability... ■

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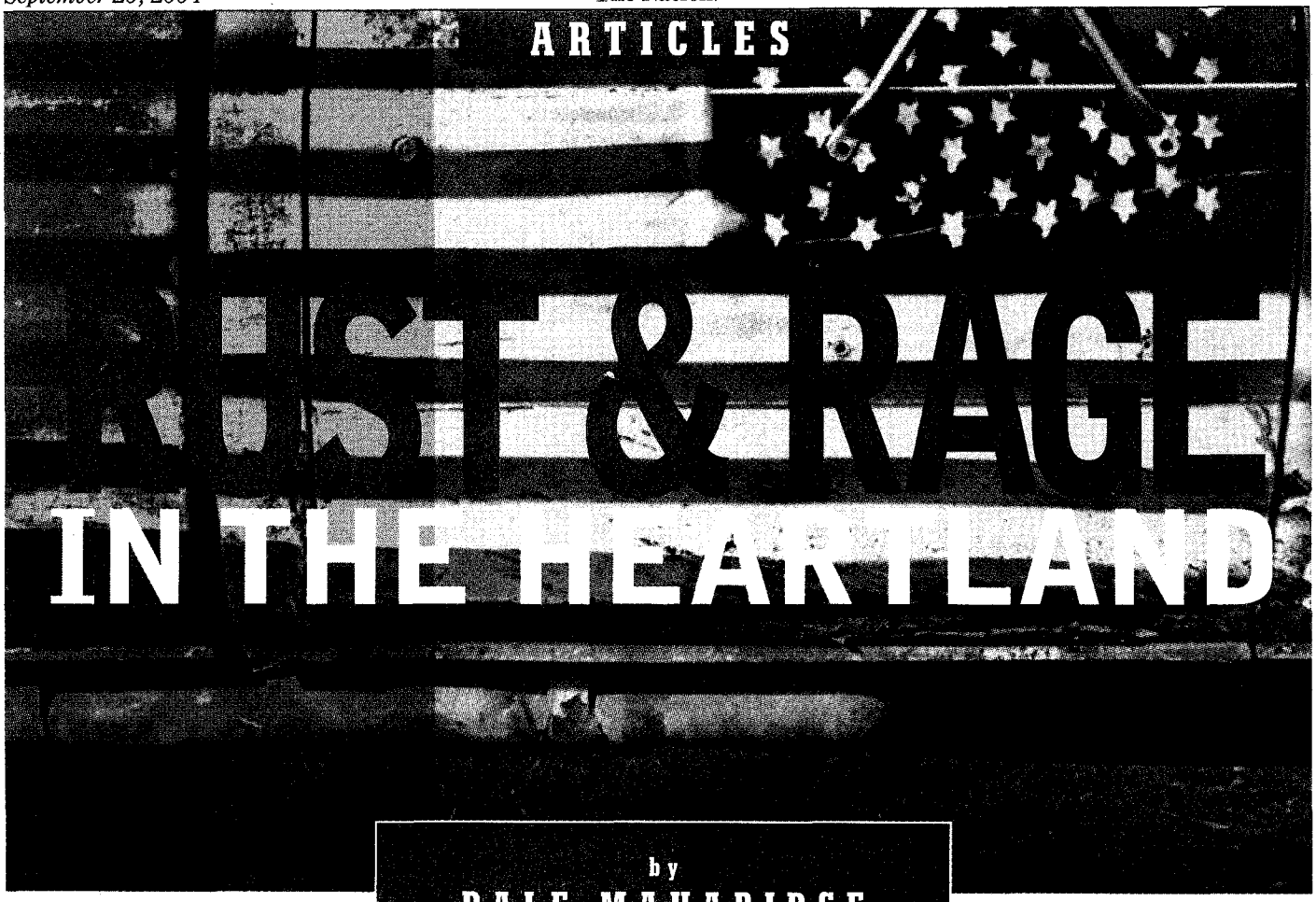

DUST & RAGE IN THE HEARTLAND

by
DALE MAHARIDGE

Working meant sparks and steel dust when I was a child. My father labored by day in a factory sharpening the milling tools that cut and form metal; after dinner he descended into our basement and a battery of machines, doing the same work as a side business. At age 12 I began grinding steel. I was on track to make this my living. Then I began writing and left blue-collar life. But I couldn't really leave it behind.

I was there for the steel-mill shutdowns in the late 1970s and later collaborated on *Journey to Nowhere*, about ruined steelworkers in Youngstown, Ohio, and the new homeless who were the victims of deindustrialization. One character in the book was Joe Marshall Sr., who had come back from the D-Day Normandy invasion to his job at US Steel's Ohio Works. A decade after his son was hired on, the company closed the mill and then dynamited it. Joe took us to the mile-long ruins in 1983. As he surveyed the rubble he said, "What Hitler couldn't do, they did it for him."

Joe spoke to the wind, not in response to any question of mine. It was a comment not of rage but of defeat, a sentiment we found among many others we documented. Despair was the norm.

A dozen years later, my collaborator, photographer Michael Williamson, and I returned to Youngstown, and traveled again across America. What was different, and startling, was the level of anger that we discovered. Defeat had morphed into wrath. In Warren, Ohio, there had just been a strike at a steel mill over a plan to sell it, which would have incurred debt and might have led to its shutdown. Homemade bombs were thrown and windows smashed in a fury. Some workers said they would have dynamited the blast furnace had they lost, effectively killing the mill. "Blowing it up would be better than going through that again," a worker said as someone gave me one of their bombs from the successful fifty-four-day strike, referring to the other shutdowns they had endured in nearby Youngstown.

Everywhere, we listened to people equally as bitter as the men of Warren—people who worked in textiles or the service economy. But what did the anger mean? It just seemed to be flailing, unfocused, drifting like the smoke from the bomb in the desert wind after we detonated it in the Mojave near old US Route 66. Even the full-band version of the song "Youngstown"—which Bruce Springsteen credits with having been inspired by our book—ends not with the steelman rising politically but simply eschewing heaven for the "fiery furnaces of hell."

Then came the morning that I watched the second tower go down from my Manhattan rooftop. I looked to the west beyond the New Jersey Palisades. I thought of the anger in the middle of the country. Beginning on Christmas Eve, I spent the next two and a half years largely in the nation's center. I drove thousands of miles and talked with hundreds of people. I went specifically to the places and people and events ignored by the national press.

What I found was that anger had now combined with fear, and together they had become a dangerous brew. Fear alone, of another terror attack, is a strong force in American politics. But fear connected with anger is an especially volatile combination.

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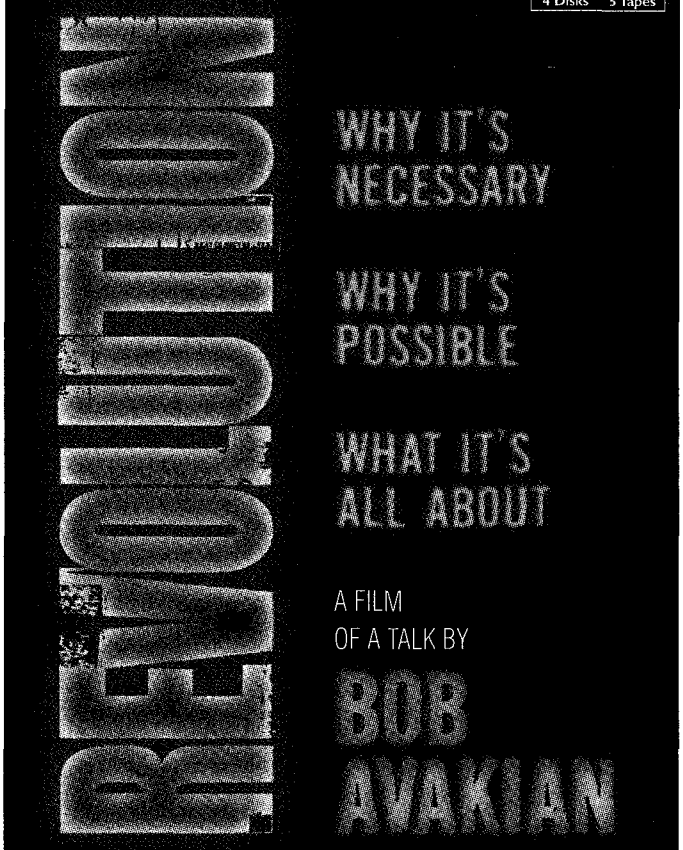

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The 9/11 attacks were not solely the genesis but an amplifier of pre-existing tensions—rooted in the radically transformed American economy, from a manufacturing dynamo to that of millions of jobs of the Wal-Mart variety. One cannot displace millions of workers from high-paying jobs to low ones without a sociopolitical cost. It's a fundamental reality that was ignored during the rise of the so-called new economy.

Prick the anger whose surface may be pro–Iraq war and anti-Arab, dismissive of Abu Ghraib, and one hears of ruined 401(k)s, poor or no healthcare, lost work. There are 1 million fewer jobs today than when George Bush took office, and the loss of higher-paid manufacturing jobs has been stunning.

Where this mood will lead is unclear, but it cannot be overlooked by anyone concerned about the future of the United States.

On the first anniversary of 9/11 I went to a mosque in Chicago and found a smaller repeat of what had happened for three nights after the attacks, when thousands of whites had rallied near this building in the suburb of Bridgeview. This time, vehicles sprouting giant US flags raced down Harlem Avenue. There were horns and peeling rubber. Two bare-chested men had flags painted neck-to-navel on their bodies. Hundreds of flag-waving white people roared in unison, "USA! USA!"

Out of the cacophony Nancy and her son Jim stood out. They clutched American flags and sputtered indignantly when the cops ordered them home. I later trudged through the snow to their front door, hoping to peel back the curtain on their anger.

Nancy, 56, was reserved while her son, 35, talked harshly about Muslims. This went on for an hour, and then the conversation took a turn away from race and religion. Nancy spoke for the first time. From both now poured a deeper animosity. Her knee is blown out, and the HMO to which she belongs through her job selling window coverings for J.C. Penney had been refusing an implant. Nancy pulled back her top and showed a pain patch on her shoulder. She was battling to get the operation.

Jim excused himself. He returned with a shopping bag stuffed with papers. It dropped with a loud thud on the kitchen table. "These are my bills. Two hundred of them. Ten thousand dollars, one of them. Fifteen thousand, another," Jim said of some $200,000 in medical bills that followed two heart attacks.

Jim had no health insurance. He remains alive by dint of a sympathetic doctor who secretly slips him the $96 biweekly regimen of medicine.

Nancy had long ago made a foray into the stock market, losing $10,000. Then she watched the market going up at the end of the 1990s and decided to plunge back in. "My neighbor said buy this one stock. He bought it for $4. I bought it for $72, just before 9/11." She laughed a sick laugh. "Now it's worth $4."

Nancy and Jim were typical of those who marched at the mosque—every person I interviewed was unemployed, underemployed, hurting economically in some way. This group of Americans, who number in the millions, harbors deep-seated anger over

This article is adapted from Dale Maharidge's new book, Homeland, *with photographs by Michael Williamson. Maharidge, who teaches at the Graduate School of Journalism at Columbia, and Williamson, a photographer at the* Washington Post, *shared a Pulitzer Prize for an earlier book,* And Their Children After Them.

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corporate shenanigans, their lack of healthcare and good jobs, yet in interview after interview I found they are often the most fervent in their support of George W. Bush and his tough rhetoric.

Why? One answer is that Republicans have used "social issues" such as school busing, Willie Horton and gay marriage to speak to these Americans; they mine the anger in the code-language way they have been doing since Goldwater ran for President in 1964, deflecting attention from the true cause of their problems. And the Democrats have been timid, or unable to form a message to break through to them. Another is what happens in any wartime period, including World Wars I and II and the Vietnam era. Any time the nation is at war, there is a tendency toward nationalism.

But what I found after September 11 was different, and more complex. I kept thinking of what I had been told by John Russo, a labor studies professor at Youngstown State University, at the time of the 1996 steelworkers' strike in Ohio. Russo worried about the workers' growing wrath—he was seeing it mature into xenophobia and right-wing radicalism. "It's not unlike the anger in prewar Germany and prewar Italy," Russo said. And, he added, it was akin to the United States in the Great Depression. "In the 1930s, America could have gone in either direction."

I didn't wholly buy into Russo's argument. Yes, there was anger. Ohio, in the heart of the crippled Rust Belt, had the most white nationalist groups of any state in the Midwest—seventy-three—according to the Center for New Community in Chicago. Yet the anger didn't seem to be building into a political force or real threat. As I drew deeper into my research, however, I began to see some historical parallels. In 1920s Weimar Germany, people carted bushel baskets of money to buy a loaf of bread; the mark was valued at 4 billion to one US dollar at one point. Bank accounts became worthless, and with economic deprivation came growing anger. What did the government do? Instead of raising taxes on the rich, who could pay, it lowered them. The terrible conditions were actually good for the industrialists and landlords. They wanted the mark to tumble, because they were able to erase debts by paying them off with worthless marks. For a brief time late in the decade, things improved, but after 1929, working-class anger erupted.

In America, too, there were stresses in the 1930s. Father Charles Coughlin's radio hate ministry mid-decade had 10 million listeners. In hindsight it appears there could have been no historical outcome other than the election of Franklin Roosevelt. But what if there had been no FDR? Walter Lippmann wrote that the nation would have "followed almost any leader anywhere he chose to go." A cynical leader could have exploited fear, a course taken by so many other inferior leaders in times of chaos. Three years into Roosevelt's term Sinclair Lewis published *It Can't Happen Here*, about a fascist takeover of the United States. The novel became a historical footnote only because Roosevelt was able to pull enough of the right margin back to the center, or, as he often said, "slightly left of center."

On the eve of a presidential election seventy-two years after Roosevelt vs. Hoover, Americans are not rioting over food, and homeless veterans are not marching on Washington. But there are different ways for anger to erupt. An undercurrent has been building for three decades. Talk-radio is but one example of how the anger has grown. In 1980 there were about seventy-five stations in the nation that were all talk. There weren't that many conservative hosts. Now there are 1,300 all-talk stations, and conservatives rule. It's no coincidence that their popularity rose concurrent with the decline of the manufacturing economy, as anger deepened in American society. These shows were not a cause but a free-market response.

How bad is it? During the 2000 election we went to Texas and Tennessee to find some of the 11.6 million impoverished children—77 percent had at least one working parent, according to the Children's Defense Fund. Because their wages were Dickensian, many had to beg for charity food. During what was alleged the most booming economy in history, America's Second Harvest (the nationwide network of food banks) gave away 1 billion pounds of food in 2000, more than double the amount in 1990. Yet it wasn't enough—many food banks ran empty. The despair we saw in the homes of working Americans that election year was equal to that we saw among the homeless in the early 1980s. In many houses I peered into refrigerators and saw them empty. Never underestimate the anger of a parent who puts her child to bed hungry.

There are millions of American workers living in a virtual depression, in a virtual Weimar. Their anger is real, as is their fear.

Many of the angry people I interviewed after 9/11, those who tune in faithfully to Rush Limbaugh or Bill O'Reilly, know their highly paid jobs are forever gone or threatened. Their mood, I imagine, is like those on the right during the 1930s who felt the economy would never again be fixed; Limbaugh, O'Reilly and others are their Father Coughlins.

And it's not just those on the bottom. A software engineer in Portland, Oregon, told me recently that some of his colleagues have turned hard right, are fearful for their jobs and are angry.

There are tens of millions of American workers living in a virtual depression, in a virtual Weimar. Their anger is real, as is their fear. Ignoring it is dangerous. The right has been addressing it in the form of appearing decisive with "preventive war," or by cranking up the xenophobia. When many of them go into the voting booth they will punch the card or pull the lever for a candidate who appears strong.

But of course not all the support for Bush comes from this camp. It doesn't have to be a majority of voters for this rage to have an impact. Given the closeness of the 2000 election and the continued volatility of a split body politic, tipping the scale just 1–2 percent will turn things. It's all about margins. The hard-right third of the electorate will likely never change. They were there in 1932, and they are with us today. All that needs to happen for the nation to re-elect George Bush, or another right-wing President in the future, is for a fraction of voters to buy into leaders who exploit the anger and fear. There are plenty of malevolent voices to fill the space unclaimed by a unifying, constructive voice.

If there isn't another terror attack, and the economy freezes in its current state of malaise for millions of Americans, we will likely muddle through without the anger taking a heavy toll. Like Sinclair Lewis's book, fears of America heading toward the end

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stage of a Weimaresque journey will be relegated to the dustbin. If there is another terror attack, however, or any of myriad things happen that turn the economy deeply down, who knows?

The solution lies in doing something both parties have ignored in their free-trade euphoria: helping working-class Americans with jobs and healthcare. That will not erase the fear of another terror attack, but it will dissipate some of the anger resulting from economic hardship. It would tip the margin back to a saner political course.

The soul of America will be decided by a fraction of the middle, where a lot of the anger resides. And that will require leadership.

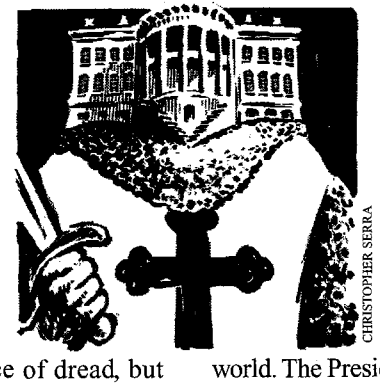
If John Kerry wins, the right margin will rage against him, as it did against Clinton before him, and against FDR in the 1930s. The anger found in America is not going to dissipate. It must be dealt with. And that will take leadership. Is John Kerry the leader? He'd better find his inner FDR—fast. If he does not, that leader needs to rapidly emerge. ■

SACRED VIOLENCE, AGAIN UNLEASHED IN 2001, COULD PROVE AS DESTRUCTIVE AS IN 1096.

The Bush Crusade

JAMES CARROLL

At the turn of the millennium, the world was braced for terrible things. Most "rational" worries were tied to an anticipated computer glitch, the Y2K problem, and even the most scientifically oriented of people seemed temporarily at the mercy of powerful mythic forces. Imagined hobgoblins leapt from hard drives directly into nightmares. Airlines canceled flights scheduled for the first day of the new year, citing fears that the computers for the traffic-control system would not work. The calendar as such had not previously been a source of dread, but all at once, time itself held a new danger. As the year 2000 approached, I bought bottled water and extra cans of tuna fish. I even withdrew a large amount of cash from the bank. Friends mocked me, then admitted to having done similar things. There were no dances-of-death or outbreaks of flagellant cults, but a millennial fever worthy of medieval superstition infected the most secular of cultures. Of course, the mystical date came and went, the computers did fine, airplanes flew and the world went back to normal.



CHRISTOPHER SERRA

Then came September 11, 2001, the millennial catastrophe—just a little late. Airplanes fell from the sky, thousands died and an entirely new kind of horror gripped the human imagination. Time, too, played its role, but time as warped by television, which created a global simultaneity, turning the whole human race into a witness, as the awful events were endlessly replayed, as if those bodies leaping from the Twin Towers would never hit the ground. Nightmare in broad daylight. New York's World Trade Center collapsed not just onto the surrounding streets but into the hearts of every person with access to CNN. Hundreds of millions of people instinctively reached out to those they loved, grateful to be alive. Death had shown itself in a new way. But if a vast throng experienced the terrible events of 9/11 as one, only one man, the President of the United States, bore a unique responsibility for finding a way to respond to them.

George W. Bush plumbed the deepest place in himself, looking for a simple expression of what the assaults of September 11 required. It was his role to lead the nation, and the very world. The President, at a moment of crisis, defines the communal response. A few days after the assault, George W. Bush did this. Speaking spontaneously, without the aid of advisers or speechwriters, he put a word on the new American purpose that both shaped it and gave it meaning. "This crusade," he said, "this war on terrorism."

Crusade. I remember a momentary feeling of vertigo at the President's use of that word, the outrageous ineptitude of it. The vertigo lifted, and what I felt then was fear, sensing not ineptitude but exactitude. My thoughts went to the elusive Osama bin Laden, how pleased he must have been, Bush already reading from his script. I am a Roman Catholic with a feeling for history, and strong regrets, therefore, over what went wrong in my own tradition once the Crusades were launched. Contrary to schoolboy romances, Hollywood fantasies and the nostalgia of royalty, the Crusades were a set of world-historic crimes. I hear the word with a third ear, alert to its dangers, and I see through its legends to its warnings. For example, in Iraq "insurgents" have lately shocked the world by decapitating hostages, turning the most taboo of acts into a military tactic. But a thousand years ago, Latin crusaders used the severed heads of Muslim fighters as missiles, catapulting them over the fortified walls of cities under siege. Taboos fall in total war, whether crusade or jihad.

For George W. Bush, crusade was an offhand reference. But all the more powerfully for that, it was an accidental probing of unintended but nevertheless real meaning. That the President used the word inadvertently suggests how it expressed his exact truth, an unmasking of his most deeply felt purpose. Crusade, he

James Carroll, a columnist for the Boston Globe, *is at work on a television documentary based on his bestselling book* Constantine's Sword. *The above is adapted from the introduction to his new book* Crusade: Chronicles of an Unjust War, *a collection of his columns since September 11, 2001. Reprinted by arrangement with Henry Holt and Company.* *Copyright 2004 by James Carroll.* *This article will also appear at www.tomdispatch.com.*

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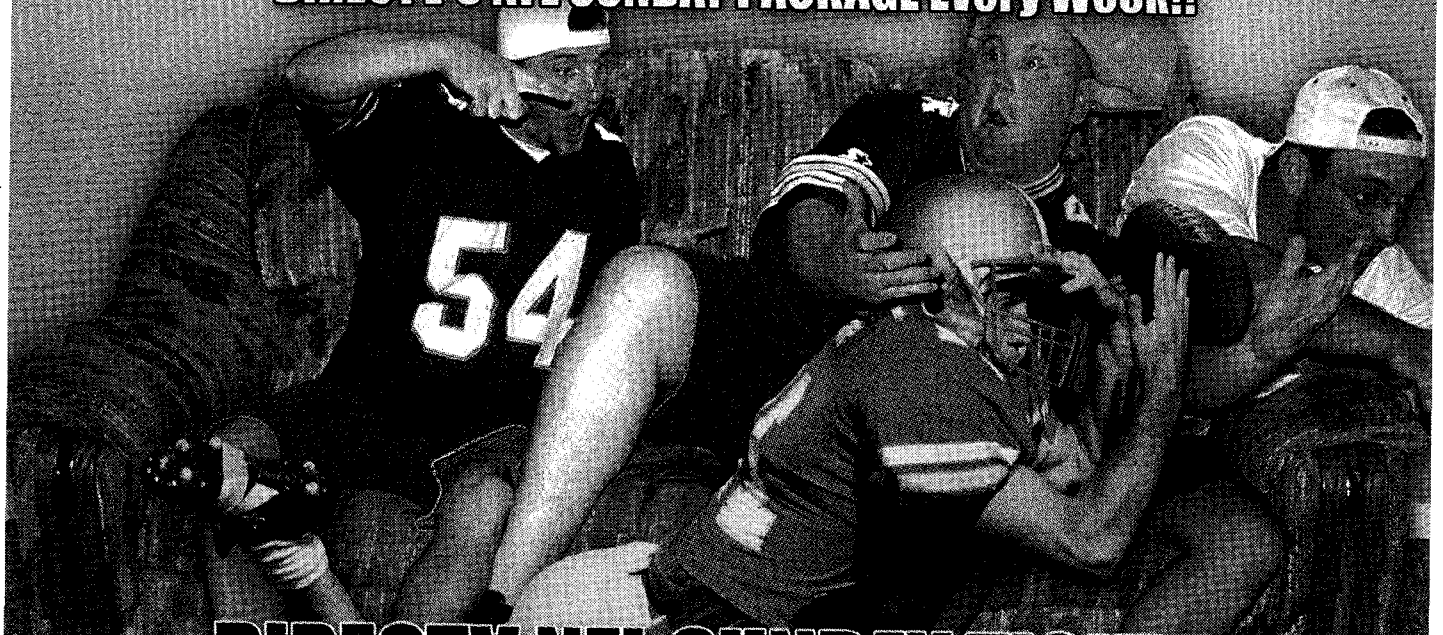

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said. Later, his embarrassed aides suggested that he had meant to use the word only as a synonym for struggle, but Bush's own syntax belied that. He defined crusade as war. Even offhandedly, he had said exactly what he meant.

Osama bin Laden was already understood to be trying to spark a "clash of civilizations" that would set the West against the whole House of Islam. After 9/11, agitated voices on all sides insisted that no such clash was inevitable. But crusade was a match for jihad, and such words threatened nothing less than apocalyptic conflict between irreconcilable cultures. Indeed, the President's reference flashed through the Arab news media. Its resonance went deeper, even, than the embarrassed aides expected—and not only among Muslims. After all, the word refers to a long series of military campaigns, which, taken together, were the defining event in the shaping of what we call Western civilization. A coherent set of political, economic, social and even mythological traditions of the Eurasian continent, from the British Isles to the far side of Arabia, grew out of the transformations wrought by the Crusades. And it is far from incidental still, both that those campaigns were conducted by Christians against Muslims, and that they, too, were attached to the irrationalities of millennial fever.

If the American President was the person carrying the main burden of shaping a response to the catastrophe of September 11, his predecessor in such a grave role, nearly a thousand years earlier, was the Catholic pope. Seeking to overcome the century-long dislocations of a postmillennial Christendom, he rallied both its leaders and commoners with a rousing call to holy war. Muslims were the infidel people who had taken the Holy Land hundreds of years before. Now, that occupation was defined as an intolerable blasphemy. The Holy Land must be redeemed. Within months of the pope's call, 100,000 people had "taken the cross" to reclaim the Holy Land for Christ. As a proportion of the population of Europe, a comparable movement today would involve more than a million people, dropping everything to go to war.

In the name of Jesus, and certain of God's blessing, crusaders launched what might be called "shock and awe" attacks everywhere they went. In Jerusalem they savagely slaughtered Muslims and Jews alike—practically the whole city. Eventually, Latin crusaders would turn on Eastern Christians, and then on Christian heretics, as blood lust outran the initial "holy" impulse. That trail of violence scars the earth and human memory even to this day—especially in the places where the crusaders wreaked their havoc. And the mental map of the Crusades, with Jerusalem at the center of the earth, still defines world politics. But the main point, in relation to Bush's instinctive response to 9/11, is that those religious invasions and wars of long ago established a cohesive Western identity precisely in opposition to Islam, an opposition that survives to this day.

With the Crusades, the violent theology of the killer God came into its own. To save the world, in this understanding, God willed the violent death of God's only beloved son. Here is the relevance of that mental map, for the crusaders were going to war to rescue the site of the salvific death of Jesus, and they displayed their devotion to the cross on which Jesus died by wearing it on their breasts. When Bush's remark was translated into Arabic for broadcast throughout the Middle East, the word "crusade" was rendered as "war of the cross."

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Before the Crusades, Christian theology had given central emphasis to the resurrection of Jesus, and to the idea of incarnation itself, but with the war of the cross, the bloody crucifixion began to dominate the Latin Christian imagination. A theology narrowly focused on the brutal death of Jesus reinforced the primitive notion that violence can be a sacred act. The cult of martyrdom, even to the point of suicidal valor, was institutionalized in the Crusades, and it is not incidental to the events of 9/11 that a culture of sacred self-destruction took equally firm hold among Muslims. The suicide-murderers of the World Trade Center, like the suicide-bombers from the West Bank and Gaza, exploit a perverse link between the willingness to die for a cause and the willingness to kill for it. Crusaders, thinking of heaven, honored that link too.

Here is the deeper significance of Bush's inadvertent reference to the Crusades: Instead of being a last recourse or a necessary evil, violence was established then as the perfectly appropriate, even chivalrous, first response to what is wrong in the world. George W. Bush is a Christian for whom this particular theology lives. While he identified Jesus as his favorite "political philosopher" when running for President in 2000, the Jesus of this evangelical President is not the "turn the other cheek" one. Bush's savior is the Jesus whose cross is wielded as a sword. George W. Bush, having cheerfully accepted responsibility for the executions of 152 death-row inmates in Texas, had already shown himself to be entirely at home with divinely sanctioned violence. After 9/11, no wonder it defined his deepest urge.

But sacred violence, once unleashed in 1096, as in 2001, had a momentum of its own. The urgent purpose of war against the "enemy outside"—what some today call the "clash of civilizations"—led quickly to the discovery of an "enemy inside." The crusaders, en route from northwestern Europe to attack the infidel far away, first fell upon, as they said, "the infidel near at hand"—Jews. For the first time in Europe, large numbers of Jews were murdered for being Jews. A crucifixion-obsessed theology saw God as willing the death of Jesus, but in the bifurcated evangelical imagination, Jews could be blamed for it, and the offense the crusaders took was mortal.

The same dynamic—war against an enemy outside leading to war against an enemy inside—can be seen at work today. It is a more complex dynamic now, with immigrant Muslims and people of Arabic descent coming under heavy pressure in the West. In Europe, Muslims are routinely demonized. In America, they are "profiled," even to the point of being deprived of basic rights. But at the same time, once again, Jews are targeted. The broad resurgence of anti-Semitism, and the tendency to scapegoat Israel as the primary source of the new discord, reflect an old tidal pull. This is true notwithstanding the harsh fact that Ariel Sharon's government took up the Bush "dead or alive" credo with enthusiasm and used the "war on terrorism" to fuel self-defeating overreactions to Palestinian provocations. But some of Israel's critics fall into the old pattern of measuring Jews against standards to which no one else is held, not even our President. That the war on terrorism is the context within which violence in Israel and Jerusalem has intensified should be no surprise. It wasn't "Israel" then, but conflict over Jerusalem played exactly such a flashpoint role a thousand years ago.

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The Crusades proved to have other destructive dynamics as well. The medieval war against Islam, having also targeted Europe's Jews, soon enough became a war against all forms of cultural and religious dissent, a war against heresy. As it hadn't been in hundreds of years, doctrine now became rigidly defined in the Latin West, and those who did not affirm dominant interpretations—Cathars, Albigensians, Eastern Orthodox—were attacked. Doctrinal uniformity, too, could be enforced with sacred violence. When the US Attorney General defines criticism of the Administration in wartime as treason, or when Congress enacts legislation that justifies the erosion of civil liberties with appeals to patriotism, they are enacting a Crusades script.

All of this is implicit in the word that President Bush first used, which came to him as naturally as a baseball reference, to define the war on terrorism. That such a dark, seething religious history of sacred violence remains largely unspoken in our world does not defuse it as an explosive force in the human unconscious. In the world of Islam, of course, its meaning could not be more explicit, or closer to consciousness. The full historical and cultural significance of "crusade" is instantly obvious, which is why a howl of protest from the Middle East drove Bush into instant verbal retreat. Yet the very inadvertence of his use of the word is the revelation: Americans do not know what fire they are playing with. Osama bin Laden, however, knows all too well, and in his periodic pronouncements, he uses the word "crusade" to this day, as a flamethrower.

Americans do not know what fire they are playing with. Osama bin Laden does, however, and he uses the word 'crusade' as a flamethrower.

Religious war is the danger here, and it is a graver one than Americans think. Despite our much-vaunted separation of church and state, America has always had a quasi-religious understanding of itself, reflected in the messianism of Puritan founder John Winthrop, the Deist optimism of Thomas Jefferson, the embrace of redemptive suffering that marked Abraham Lincoln and, for that matter, the conviction of Eisenhower's Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, that Communism had to be opposed on a global scale if only because of its atheism. But never before has America been brought deeper into a dynamite-wired holy of holies than in our President's war on terrorism. Despite the post-Iraq toning down of Washington's rhetoric of empire, and the rejection of further crusader references—although Secretary of State Colin Powell used the word this past March—Bush's war openly remains a cosmic battle between nothing less than the transcendent forces of good and evil. Such a battle is necessarily unlimited and open-ended, and so justifies radical actions—the abandonment, for example, of established notions of civic justice at home and of traditional alliances abroad.

A cosmic moral-religious battle justifies, equally, risks of world-historic proportioned disaster, since the ultimate outcome of such a conflict is to be measured not by actual consequences on this earth but by the earth-transcending will of God. Our war on terrorism, before it is anything else, is thus an imagined conflict, taking place primarily in a mythic realm beyond history.

In waging such a "war," the enemy is to be engaged everywhere and nowhere, not just because the actual nihilists who threaten the social order are faceless and deracinated but because each fanatical suicide-bomber is only an instance of the transcendent enemy—and so the other face of us. Each terrorist is, in effect, a sacrament of the larger reality, which is "terrorism." Instead of perceiving unconnected centers of inhuman violence—tribal warlords, Mafia chieftains, nationalist fighters, xenophobic Luddites—President Bush projects the grandest and most interlocking strategies of conspiracy, belief and organization. By the canonization of the war on terrorism, petty nihilists are elevated to the status of world-historic warriors, exactly the fate they might have wished for. This is why the conflict readily bleeds from one locus to another—Afghanistan then, Iraq now, Iran or some other land of evil soon—and why, for that matter, the targeted enemies are entirely interchangeable—here Osama bin Laden, there Saddam Hussein, here the leader of Iran, there of North Korea. They are all essentially one enemy—one "axis"—despite their differences from one another, or even hatred of one another.

Hard-boiled men and women who may not share Bush's fervent spirituality can nonetheless support his purpose because, undergirding the new ideology, there is an authentic global crisis that requires an urgent response. New technologies are now making it possible for small groups of nihilists, or even single individuals, to wreak havoc on a scale unprecedented in history. This is the ultimate "asymmetric threat." The attacks of 9/11, amplified by the murderous echo of the anthrax mailer, the as-yet-unapprehended psychopath who sent deadly letters to journalists and government officials in the weeks after 9/11, put that new condition on display for all the world to see. Innovations in physics, biology, chemistry and information technology—and soon, possibly, in nanotechnology and genetic engineering—have had the unforeseen effect of threatening to put in a few hands the destructive power that, in former times, could be exercised only by sizable armies. This is the real condition to which the Bush Administration is responding. The problem is actual, if not yet fully present.

So, to put the best face on the Bush agenda (leaving aside questions of oil, global market control and economic or military hegemony), a humane project of antiproliferation can be seen at its core. Yet a nation that was trying to promote the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear weapons, would behave precisely as the Bush Administration has behaved over the past three years. The Pentagon's chest-thumping concept of "full spectrum dominance" itself motivates other nations to seek sources of countervailing power, and when the United States actually goes to war to impose its widely disputed notion of order on some states, but not others, nations—friendly as well as unfriendly—find themselves with an urgent reason to acquire some means of deterring such intervention.

The odd and tragic thing is that the world before Bush was actually nearing consensus on how to manage the problem of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and had begun to put in place promising structures designed to prevent such spread. Centrally embodied in the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty of 1968, which had successfully and amazingly kept the number of nuclear powers, actual as well as admitted, relatively low, that consensus gave primacy to treaty obligations, international

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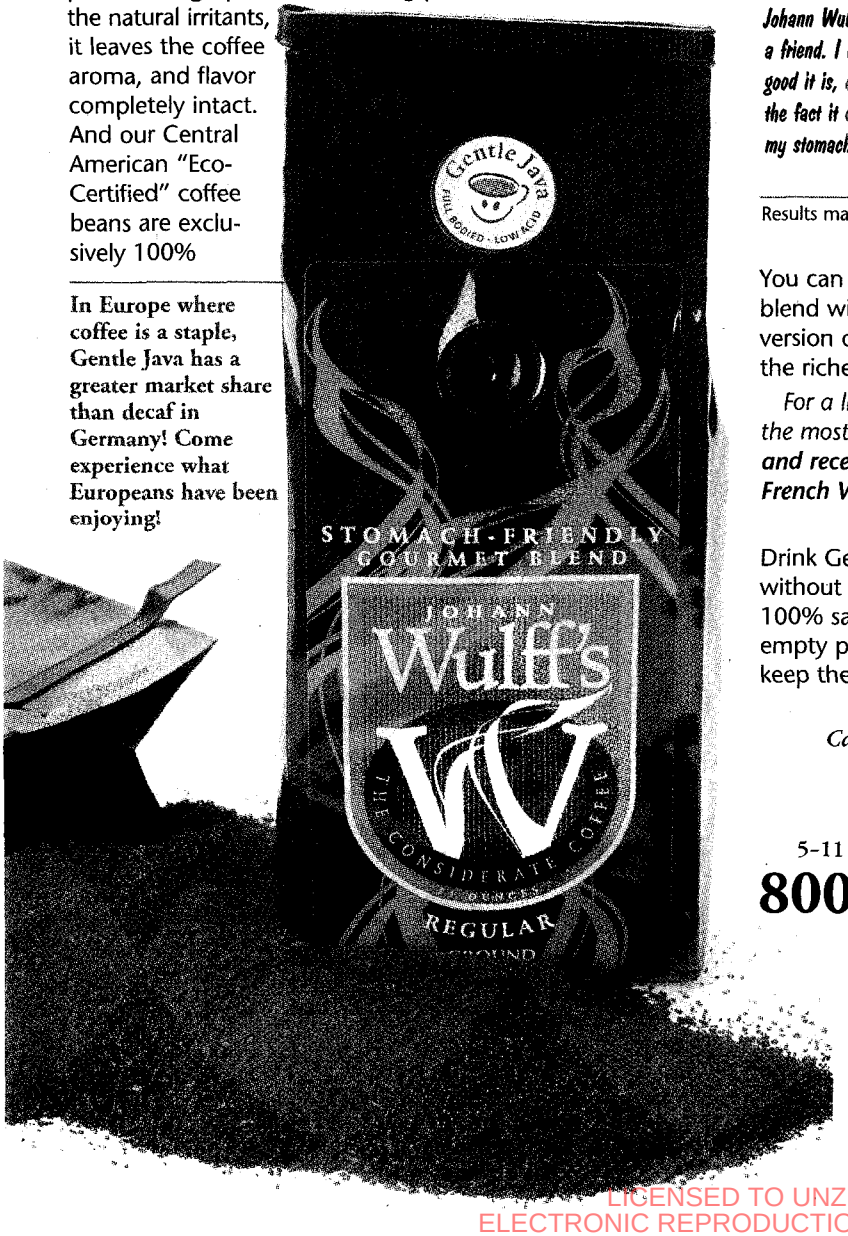

"I was diagnosed with reflux three years ago and my doctor suggested (strongly) that I give up coffee. I have enjoyed coffee every day of my adult life and I found it impossible to quit. I cut back, tried to offset the problem by overmedicating with antacid tablets but that did not eliminate the problem. I recently discovered Johann Wulff Coffee, through a friend. I cannot believe how good it is, especially considering the fact it does not affect my stomach." -Jack

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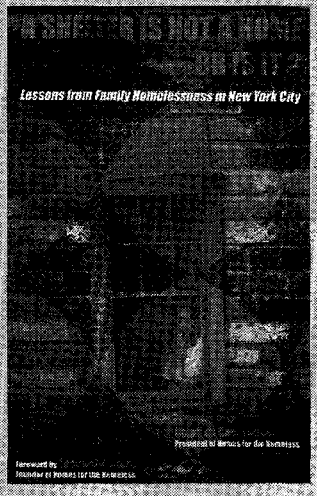

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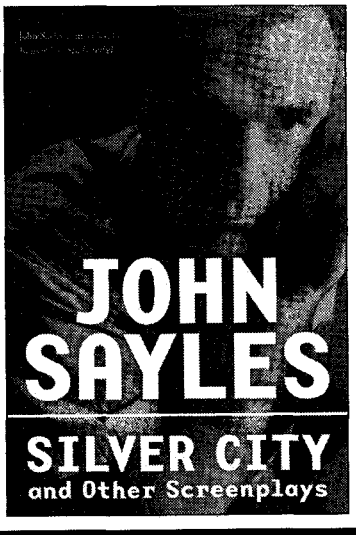

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cooperation and a serious commitment by existing nuclear powers to move toward ultimate nuclear abolition. All of that has been trashed by Bush. "International law?" he smirked in December 2003. "I better call my lawyer."

Now indications are that nations all over the globe—Japan, Saudi Arabia, Argentina, Brazil, Australia—have begun re-evaluating their rejections of nukes, and some are positively rushing to acquire them. Iran and North Korea are likely to be only the tip of this radioactive iceberg. Nuclear-armed Pakistan and India are a grim forecast of the future on every continent. And the Bush Administration—by declaring its own nuclear arsenal permanent, by threatening nuclear first-strikes against other nations, by "warehousing" treaty-defused warheads instead of destroying them, by developing a new line of "usable" nukes, by moving to weaponize the "high frontier" of outer space, by doing little to help Russia get rid of its rotting nuclear stockpile, by embracing "preventive war"—is enabling this trend instead of discouraging it. How can this be?

The problem has its roots in a long-term American forgetfulness, going back to the acid fog in which the United States ended World War II. There was never a complete moral reckoning with the harsh momentum of that conflict's denouement—how American leaders embraced a strategy of terror bombing, slaughtering whole urban populations, and how, finally, they ushered in the atomic age with the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Scholars have debated those questions, but politicians have avoided them, and most citizens have pretended they aren't really questions at all. America's enduring assumptions about its own moral supremacy, its own altruism, its own exceptionalism, have hardly been punctured by consideration of the possibility that we, too, are capable of grave mistakes, terrible crimes. Such awareness, drawn from a fuller reckoning with days gone by—with August 6 and 9, 1945, above all—would inhibit America's present claim to moral grandeur, which is simultaneously a claim, of course, to economic and political grandiosity. The indispensable nation must dispense with what went before.

"The past is never dead," William Faulkner said. "It isn't even past." How Americans remember their country's use of terror bombing affects how they think of terrorism; how they remember the first use of nuclear weapons has profound relevance for how the United States behaves in relation to nuclear weapons today. If the long American embrace of nuclear "mutual assured destruction" is unexamined; if the Pentagon's treaty-violating rejection of the ideal of eventual nuclear abolition is unquestioned—then the Bush Administration's embrace of nukes as normal, usable weapons will not seem offensive.

Memory is a political act. Forgetfulness is the handmaiden of tyranny. The Bush Administration is fully committed to maintaining what the historian Marc Trachtenberg calls our "nuclear amnesia" even as the Administration seeks to impose a unilateral structure of control on the world. As it pursues a world-threatening campaign against other people's weapons of mass destruction, that is, the Bush Administration refuses to confront the moral meaning of America's own weapons of mass destruction, not to mention their viral character, as other nations seek smaller versions of the American arsenal, if only to deter Bush's next "preventive" war. The United States' own arsenal, in other

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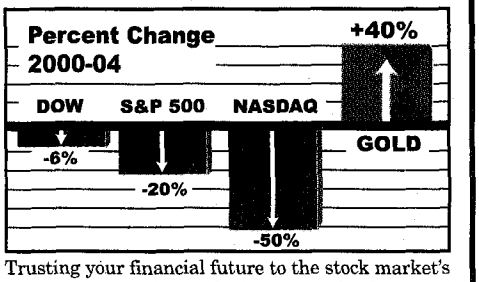

Trusting your financial future to the stock market's performance has been a bad situation for the past 5 years. In fact, the above graph clearly shows that not only the DOW, but the S&P 500 and NASDAQ are all down from January 2000. Gold, on the other hand, is up 34% since January 2000. If you had purchased $50,000 worth of Gold in January 2000, that same gold would be worth $67,000 today - a profit of $17,000. Most stocks cannot even come close to that gain. The Gold Market is on the move and is showing signs of taking off like a rocket. Many experts can offer excellent insight into the future price trends of Gold, but no one, including The United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve, can guarantee a Gold Coin's future value will go up or down. Do not wait to move your hard earned money out of stocks and into Gold.

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words, remains the primordial cause of the WMD plague.

"Memory," the novelist Paul Auster has written, is "the space in which a thing happens for the second time." No one wants the terrible events that came after the rising of the sun on September 11, 2001, to happen for a second time except in the realm of remembrance, leading to understanding and commitment. But all the ways George Bush exploited those events, betraying the memory of those who died in them, must be lifted up and examined again, so that the outrageousness of his political purpose can be felt in its fullness. Exactly how the war on terrorism unfolded; how it bled into the wars against Afghanistan, then Iraq; how American fears were exacerbated by Administration alarms; how civil rights were undermined, treaties broken, alliances abandoned, coarseness embraced—none of this should be forgotten.

Given how they have been so dramatically unfulfilled, Washington's initial hubristic impulses toward a new imperial dominance should not be forgotten. That the first purpose of the war—Osama "dead or alive"—changed when Al Qaeda proved elusive should not be forgotten. That the early justification for the war against Iraq—Saddam's weapons of mass destruction—changed when they proved nonexistent should not be forgotten. That in former times the US government behaved as if facts mattered, as if evidence informed policy, should not be forgotten. That Afghanistan and Iraq are a shambles, with thousands dead and hundreds of thousands at risk from disease, disorder and despair, should not be forgotten. That a now-disdainful world gave itself in unbridled love to America on 9/11 should not be forgotten.

Nor, given Bush's reference, should the most relevant fact about the Crusades be forgotten—that, on their own terms and notwithstanding the romance of history, they were, in the end, an overwhelming failure. The 1096 campaign, the "First Crusade," finally "succeeded" in 1099, when a remnant army fell upon Jerusalem, slaughtering much of its population. But armies under Saladin reasserted Islamic control in 1187, and subsequent Crusades never succeeded in re-establishing Latin dominance in the Holy Land. The *reconquista* Crusades reclaimed Spain and Portugal for Christian Europe, but in the process destroyed the glorious Iberian *convivencia*, a high civilization never to be matched below the Pyrenees again.

Meanwhile, intra-Christian crusades, wars against heresy, only made permanent the East-West split between Latin Catholicism and "schismatic" Eastern Orthodoxy, and made inevitable the eventual break, in the Reformation, between a Protestant north and a Catholic south. The Crusades, one could argue, established basic structures of Western civilization, while undermining the possibility that their grandest ideals would ever be realized.

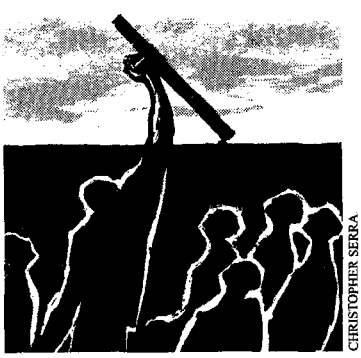
Will such consequences—new global structures of an American imperium, hollowed-out hopes for a humane and just internationalism—follow in the train of George W. Bush's crusade? This question will be answered in smaller part by anonymous, ad hoc armies of on-the-ground human beings in foreign lands, many of whom will resist Washington to the death. In larger part, the question will be answered by those privileged to be citizens of the United States. To us falls the ultimate power over the American moral and political agenda. As has never been true of any empire before, because this one is still a democracy, such power belongs to citizens absolutely. If the power is ours, so is the responsibility. ■

EVEN IN A SEEMINGLY LOST CAUSE, ONE PERSON MAY UNKNOWINGLY INSPIRE ANOTHER.

Hope in a Time of Fear

PAUL ROGAT LOEB

A few years ago, I heard Archbishop Desmond Tutu speak at a Los Angeles benefit for a South African project. He'd been fighting prostate cancer, was tired that evening and had taken a nap before his talk. But when Tutu addressed the audience he became animated, expressing amazement that his long-oppressed country had provided the world with an unforgettable lesson in reconciliation and hope. Afterward, a few other people spoke, then a band from East LA took the stage and launched into an irresistibly rhythmic tune. People started dancing. Suddenly I noticed Tutu, boogying away in the middle of the crowd.



CHRISTOPHER SERRA

I'd never seen a Nobel Peace Prize winner, still less one with a potentially fatal illness, move with such joy and abandonment. Tutu, I realized, knows how to have a good time. Indeed, it dawned on me that his ability to recognize and embrace life's pleasures helps him face its cruelties and disappointments, be they personal or political.

Few of us will match Tutu's achievements, but we'd do well to learn from someone who spent years challenging apartheid's brutal system of human degradation, yet has remained lighthearted and free of bitterness. Any clear-eyed view of the world recognizes that grave threats exist: war, environmental destruction, the runaway power of corporate greed. To make matters worse, those in power often take advantage of real threats, like terrorism, by exploiting fear and feelings of vulnerability for their own gain. Today fear so dominates our society that Americans hesitate to speak out against the very actions that make other people hate us, wor-

Paul Rogat Loeb is the author of Soul of a Citizen *and the editor of* The Impossible Will Take a Little While: A Citizen's Guide to Hope in a Time of Fear *(Basic Books, www.theimpossible.org), from which this and the two related articles were adapted. An additional three adapted pieces can be found at www.thenation.com.*

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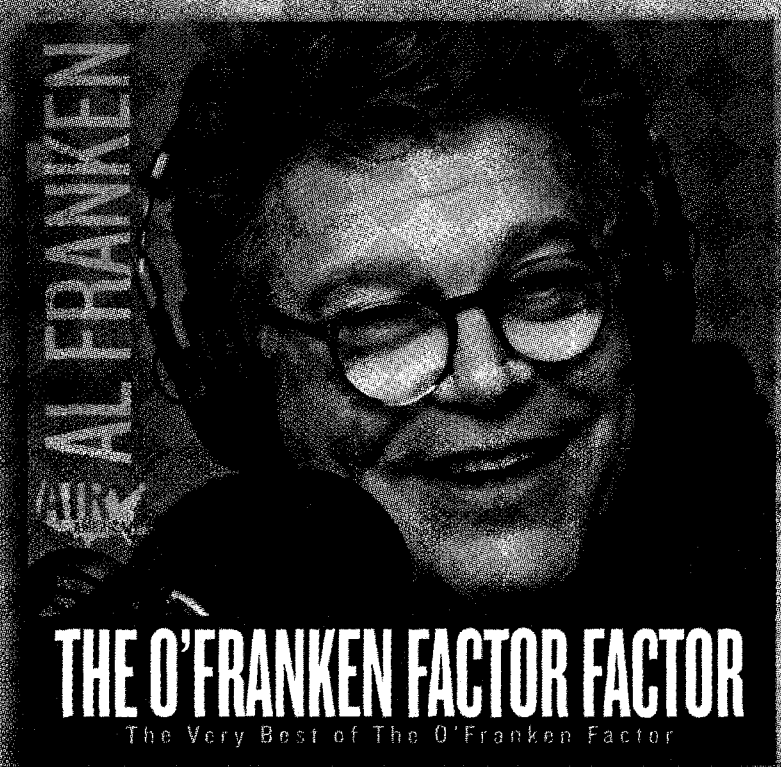

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ried that they may be deemed unpatriotic or simply ignored, marginalized. When people begin to silence themselves, democracy itself is imperiled.

The antidote to such fear and silence is hope: defiant, resilient, persistent hope, of the kind that Tutu embodies. In this vision, we act no matter what the seeming odds, both to be true to ourselves and to open up new possibilities. As Jim Wallis, editor of the evangelical social justice magazine *Sojourners*, writes, "Hope is believing in spite of the evidence, then watching the evidence change."

Another way of expressing Wallis's sentiment is that hope is a way of looking at the world—more than that, it's a way of life. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the stories of those who, like Tutu and Nelson Mandela, persist under the most dangerous conditions, when simply to imagine aloud the possibility of change is deemed a crime or viewed as a type of madness. Consider former Czech president Vaclav Havel, whose country's experience, he argues, proves that a series of small, seemingly futile moral actions can bring down an empire. When the Czech rock band Plastic People of the Universe was first outlawed and arrested because the authorities said their Frank Zappa–influenced music was "morbid" and had a "negative social impact," Havel organized a defense committee. That in turn evolved into the Charter 77 organization, which set the stage for Czechoslovakia's broader democracy movement. As Havel wrote, three years before the Communist dictatorship fell, "Hope is not prognostication. It is an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart."

Even in a seemingly losing cause, one person may unknowingly inspire another, and that person yet a third, who could go on to change the world, or at least a small corner of it. Rosa Parks's husband, Raymond, convinced her to attend her first NAACP meeting, the initial step on a twelve-year path that brought her to that fateful day on the bus in Montgomery. But who got Raymond Parks involved? And why did that person take the trouble to do so?

In 1969 Henry Kissinger told the North Vietnamese that Richard Nixon would dramatically escalate the Vietnam War, with "grave consequences," unless both they and the National Liberation Front in the South stopped fighting. Nixon had military advisers prepare detailed plans, including mission folders with photographs of potential targets for nuclear strikes. But two weeks before the President's November 1 deadline, there was a nationwide day of protest, the Moratorium, when more than a million Americans joined local demonstrations, vigils, church services, petition drives and other forms of opposition. The next month, more than half a million people marched in Washington, DC. An Administration spokesperson announced that Nixon had

The Sukkah of Shalom

In 2001, just a few weeks after the 9/11 attacks, the Jewish community celebrated the harvest festival of Sukkot. Many did so by building a sukkah—a fragile hut with a leafy roof, the most vulnerable of houses. Vulnerable in time, since it lasts for only a week each year. Vulnerable in space, since its roof must be not only leafy but leaky enough to let in the starlight and gusts of wind and rain.

In our evening prayers throughout the year, just as we prepare to lie down in vulnerable sleep, we plead with God, "Spread over us Your sukkah of shalom—of peace and safety."

Why does the prayer plead for a sukkah of shalom, rather than a temple or fortress or palace of shalom, which would surely be safer and more secure? Precisely because the sukkah is so vulnerable.

For much of our lives we try to achieve peace and safety by building with steel and concrete and toughness:

Pyramids
Air raid shelters
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World Trade Centers

But the sukkah reminds us: We are in truth all vulnerable. If as the prophet Dylan sang, "A hard rain's a-gonna fall," it will fall on all of us. And on 9/11/01 the ancient truth came home: We all live in a sukkah. Even the widest oceans, the mightiest buildings, the wealthiest balance sheets, the most powerful weapons did not shield us.

There are only wispy walls and leaky roofs between us. The planet is in fact one interwoven web of life. The command to love my neighbor as I do myself is not an admonition to be nice: It is a statement of truth, like the law of gravity. However much and in whatever way I love my neighbor, that will turn out to be the way I love myself. If I pour contempt upon my neighbor, hatred will recoil upon me. Only a world where all communities feel vulnerable, and therefore connected to all other communities, can prevent such acts of rage and mass murder.

Not every demand of the poor and disempowered is legitimate simply because it is an expression of pain. But can we open the ears of our hearts to ask: Have we ourselves had a hand in creating the pain? Can we act to lighten it? Can we create for ourselves a sukkah in time, a sukkah of reflection and renewal, as well as recognizing the sukkah of vulnerable space in which we actually live? Could we in every year use the days that surround 9/11 to gather for reflection, for self-examination? Could we gather in a mood of awe rather than fear, to mourn what tears the world apart and learn what weaves the world together?

The choice we face is broader than politics, deeper than charity. It is whether we see the world chiefly as property to be controlled, defined by walls and fences that must be built ever higher, ever thicker, ever tougher; or made up chiefly of an open weave of compassion and connection, open sukkah next to open sukkah. Whatever we build where the tall Twin Towers once stood, America and the world will be living in a leafy, leaky, shaky sukkah. Hope comes from raising that simple truth to visibility. We must spread over all of us the sukkah of shalom. ARTHUR WASKOW

Rabbi Arthur Waskow, director of the Shalom Center (www.shalomctr.org), is the author, with Phyllis Berman, of A Time for Every Purpose Under Heaven. *Part of this essay appeared in* From the Ashes: A Spiritual Response to the Attack on America, *by the editors of Beliefnet (Rodale).*

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In Full Bloom

My activism—cultural, political, spiritual—is rooted in my love of nature and my delight in human beings. It is when people are at peace, content, full, that they are most likely to meet my expectation, selfish, no doubt, that they be a generous, joyous, even entertaining experience for me. I believe people exist to be enjoyed, much as a restful or engaging view might be. As the ocean or drifting clouds might be. Or as if they were the human equivalent of melons, mangoes or any other kind of attractive, seductive fruit. When I am in the presence of other human beings I want to revel in their creative and intellectual fullness, their uninhibited social warmth. I want their precious human radiance to wrap me in light. I do not want fear of war or starvation or bodily mutilation to steal both my pleasure in them and their own birthright. Everything I would like other people to be for me, I want to be for them.

I have been an activist all my adult life, though I have sometimes felt embarrassed to call myself one. In the 1960s, many of us were plagued by the notion that, given the magnitude of the task before us—the dismantling of American apartheid—our individual acts were puny. There was also the apparent reality that the most committed, most directly confrontational people suffered more. The most "revolutionary" often ended up beaten, in prison or dead. Shot down in front of their children, blown up in cars or in church, run over by racist drunks, raped and thrown in the river.

In Mississippi, where I lived from 1967 to 1974, people who challenged the system anticipated menace, battery, even murder, every day. In this context, I sometimes felt ashamed that my contributions at the time were not more radical. I taught in two local black colleges, I wrote about the Movement, and I created tiny history booklets that were used to teach the teachers of children enrolled in Head Start. And, of course, I was interracially married, which was illegal. It was perhaps in Mississippi during those years that I understood how the daily news of disaster can become, for the spirit, a numbing assault, and that one's own activism, however modest, fighting against this tide of death, provides at least the possibility of generating a different kind of "news." A "news" that empowers rather than defeats.

There is always a moment in any kind of struggle when one feels in full bloom. Vivid. Alive. One might be blown to bits in such a moment and still be at peace. Martin Luther King Jr. at the mountaintop. Gandhi dying with the name of God on his lips. Sojourner Truth baring her breasts at a women's rights convention in 1851. Harriet Tubman exposing her revolver to some of the slaves she had freed, who, fearing an unknown freedom, looked longingly backward to their captivity, thereby endangering the freedom of all. To be such a person or to witness anyone at this moment of transcendent presence is to know that what is human is linked, by a daring compassion, to what is divine. During my years of being close to people engaged in changing the world I have seen fear turn into courage. Sorrow into joy. Funerals into celebrations. Because whatever the consequences, people, standing side by side, have expressed who they really are, and that ultimately they believe in the love of the world and each other enough to be that—which is the foundation of activism.

It has become a common feeling, I believe, as we have watched our heroes falling over the years, that our own small stone of activism, which might not seem to measure up to the rugged boulders of heroism we have so admired, is a paltry offering toward the building of an edifice of hope. Many who believe this choose to withhold their offerings out of shame.

This is the tragedy of our world. For we can do nothing substantial toward changing our course on the planet, a destructive one, without rousing ourselves, individual by individual, and bringing our small, imperfect stones to the pile.

In this regard, I have a story to tell. In the mid-1960s during a voter registration campaign in south Georgia, my canvassing partner, Beverly, a local black teenager, was arrested on a bogus moving-violation charge. This was meant to intimidate her, "show her her place" and terrify her family. Those of us who feared for her safety during the night held a vigil outside the jail. I remember the raw vulnerability I felt as the swaggering state troopers—each of them three times Beverly's size, and mine—stomped in and out of the building, scowling at us. The feeling of solidarity with Beverly and our friends was strong, but also the feeling of being alone, as it occurred to me that not even my parents knew where I was. We were black and very young: We knew no one in White America paid the slightest attention to the deaths of such as us. It was partly because of this that we sometimes resented the presence of the white people who came to stand, and take their chances, with us. I was one of those to whom such resentment came easily.

I especially resented blond Paul from Minnesota, whose Aryan appearance meant, when he was not with us, freedom and almost worship in the race-obsessed South. I had treated him with coolness since the day we met. We certainly did not invite him to our vigil. And yet, at just the moment I felt most downhearted, I heard someone coming along the street in our direction, whistling. A moment later Paul appeared. Still whistling a Movement spiritual that sounded strange, even comical, on his lips, he calmly took his place beside us. Knowing his Nordic presence meant a measure of safety for us, he offered it, without being asked. This remains a moment as bright as any I recall from that time.

All we own, at least for the short time we have it, is our life. With it we write what we come to know of the world. I believe the Earth is good. That people, untortured by circumstance or fate, are also good. I do not believe the people of the world are naturally my enemies, or that animals, including snakes, are, or that Nature is. Whenever I experience evil, and it is not, unfortunately, uncommon to experience it in these times, my deepest feeling is disappointment. I have learned to accept the fact that we risk disappointment, disillusionment, even despair, every time we act. Every time we decide to believe the world can be better. Every time we decide to trust others to be as noble as we think they are. And that there might be years during which our grief is equal to, or even greater than, our hope. The alternative, however, not to act, and therefore to miss experiencing other people at their best, reaching toward their fullness, has never appealed to me.

Only justice can stop a curse.

ALICE WALKER

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*Source: "Lighting the Way to Energy Savings"; 1999

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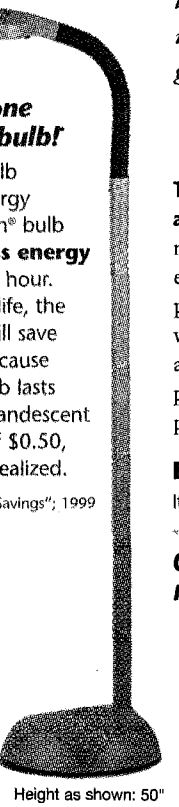

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watched the Washington Redskins football game and that the demonstrations wouldn't affect his policies in the slightest. That fed the frustration of far too many in the peace movement and accelerated the descent of some, like the Weathermen, into violence. Yet privately, as we now know from Nixon's memoirs, he decided the movement had, in his words, so "polarized" American opinion that he couldn't carry out his threat. Moratorium participants had no idea that their efforts may have been helping to stop a nuclear attack.

The protests of early 2003, the largest in decades, brought many into their first public stand, or their first in years. It wasn't easy to voice opposition when being called allies of terrorism. Yet people did, in every community in the country, joined by the largest global peace demonstrations in history. This movement marked the first steps for innumerable individuals who, over time, may well join the ranks of the unsung heroes who ultimately create all change.

Even if the struggle outlives us, conviction matters. Actions of conscience confirm the link between our fate and that of everyone and everything else on the planet, respecting and reinforcing the fundamental connections without which life itself is impossible. Whether we flourish or perish depends on how well we can honor the interdependence that Martin Luther King Jr. evoked: "We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny."

Nor should we forget that courage is contagious, that it overcomes the silence and fear that estrange people from one another. In Poland during the late 1970s, leaders of the workers' support movement KOR made a point of printing their names and phone numbers on the back of mimeographed sheets describing incidents of police harassment against then-unknown activists such as Lech Walesa. It was as if, in the words of reporter Lawrence Weschler, they were "calling out to everyone else, 'Come on out! Be open. What can they do to us if we all start taking responsibility for our true dreams?'"

As the Polish activists discovered, we gain something profound when we stand up for our beliefs, just as part of us dies when we know that something is wrong, yet do nothing. We could call this radical dignity. We don't have to tackle every issue, but if we avoid them all, if we remain silent in the face of cruelty, injustice and oppression, we sacrifice part of our soul. In this sense, we keep on acting based on our conscience because by doing so we affirm our humanity—the core of who we are, and what we hold in common with others. ■

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

UNITE; I refused. Were these false accusations an act of retaliation? Is he not in a conflict of interest? For years, Dreier has religiously championed SweatX while continuously dismissing the legitimacy of American Apparel. Both authors have deep intellectual ties to the union movement and staunchly claim "only an independent, democratic labor union can guarantee that a sewing factory is sweat-free, whether in the United States or overseas." Perhaps Dreier wrote so favorably about SweatX to justify the intellectual support he had provided them at numerous lectures and to the media. In the end, the article is clearly self-serving for the authors' academic agendas.

DOV CHARNEY
Senior partner, American Apparel

San Francisco

■ Richard Appelbaum and Peter Dreier's article may have given readers the impression that Global Exchange produces No Sweat brand sneakers. Global Exchange is proud to carry the No Sweat sneaker in our "fair trade" stores, but it is not our brand or our product. The union-made shoes are produced by No Sweat Apparel (www.nosweatapparel.com). JASON MARK
Global Exchange

APPELBAUM AND DREIER REPLY

Santa Barbara; Los Angeles

■ American Apparel senior partner Dov Charney's concerns are centered around two sentences in our article that referred to his company. We wrote about SweatX, not American Apparel, but we wish to set the record straight.

Against overwhelming odds, UNITE has been working hard to improve the working and living conditions of vulnerable low-wage immigrant workers. In September 2003, UNITE launched a unionization drive at American Apparel, leafleting the factory and visiting with workers off-site. The drive, in which workers were asked to sign cards authorizing a union election, proved to be short-lived. Within a week, according to sworn affidavits filed by nonunion American Apparel workers as well as union organizers, the company allegedly engaged in a number of unlawful activities aimed at thwarting the election. Specifically, UNITE charged that American Apparel had

§ excluded union organizers from the company parking lot, threatening them with arrest if they didn't leave;

§ threatened to shut down the factory if organizers entered;

§ questioned employees about their support for the union, including asking those who had signed authorization cards to withdraw them;

§ surveilled employee union activities.

In addition, according to the affidavits, management put enormous pressure on workers to reject the union, which management portrayed as ineffective, dishonest, costly and counter to the workers' interests. A common claim, as alleged in the affidavits, was that if the factory unionized it might be forced to close. Although workers were initially receptive to the union (more than a hundred election authorization cards were reportedly handed out the first day of the drive), the affidavits claim that a well-orchestrated program of antiunion activity quickly turned workers sour through false claims and thinly veiled intimidation.

The NLRB determined that the allegations were sufficiently serious "that injunctive relief under Section 10(j) of the [National Labor Relations] Act may be warranted" (letter from NLRB to UNITE, October 15, 2003). In effect, the NLRB was prepared to take American Apparel to court. American Apparel then settled the matter by agreeing to read and post an NLRB notice laying out its workers' legal rights and pledging to refrain from engaging in the activities that UNITE claimed the company used to thwart the union drive. As is customary in such cases, the agreement also contained a clause stipulating that there was no admission of guilt on the part of American Apparel.

On one point, however, Charney is correct: We are indeed pro-union. Workers who depend on the good graces of their employers (regardless of their claims to be well intentioned) are ultimately vulnerable to economic downswings, global competition and outright exploitation. The best way to know if a garment factory is "sweat free" is still to look for the union label.

RICHARD APPELBAUM AND PETER DREIER

CLARIFICATION

■ In Jim Hightower's "Bush Zones Go National" (Aug. 16/23) the FBI internal newsletter referred to in a discussion of spying on Americans is not contemporary; it dates from 1971.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Totem and Taboo

RONALD STEEL

It did not take long for a term that not long ago was slanderous to become a cliché. Suddenly everyone has discovered, and accepts as a commonplace, that the United States possesses an empire. For some our newly acknowledged imperial status is a source of celebration, for others of lamentation, but it is in any case something that cannot be denied. It is no longer even a choice, but rather a simple reality.

Of course the United States is an empire, and in most respects the most powerful that the world has ever seen. Given the current global balance of power—where the only serious rival has self-destructed, and aspirants to the title have a long way to go before being considered seriously—there is nothing else that it can be. Even an American government that tried to practice restraint, self-denial and mutuality would still be the dominant factor in any political equation. It sets the agenda even by its absence. Consider the cases of Bosnia, where the bloodshed did not end until the United States intervened, and Rwanda, and today Sudan, where it continued unabated because the United States chose to stand aside. Not to mention, of course, Iraq, where the American government launched a war that it calls "preventive" but the rest of the world views as simple aggression. A nation possessing this kind of power—the world's dominant economy, the currency with which the world reckons and pays its bills, the most powerful armed force with bases around the globe and a budget that nearly exceeds that of all other nations combined, and with a messianic desire to spread its ideology and to mold the lives and minds of the rest of the world in its image—is by any honest reckoning an imperial state.

The empire is what it is, and the power realities will not be greatly different even if the name is euphemized and the personalities who direct it are changed. How long it will last rests in good measure on how well it is managed. At the moment the prognosis does not seem promising. We are in the early stages of imperial self-recognition. Americans are only just beginning to understand the role their nation plays in the world, and the price incurred by that role. That acknowledgment is late in coming because we have been brought up on an image of ourselves as rebellious colonists winning liberation from the clutches of imperial Europe.

Our sense of aggrieved innocence usefully masks the violence of our own history and the motivations for many of our foreign wars. But this is not generally taught in our textbooks. Some argue, as does British economic historian Niall Ferguson in *Colossus*, his rhapsody to the imperial tradition, not merely "that the United States is an empire but that it has always been an empire." He rightly observes that the American nation was no sooner founded than its leaders embarked on an energetic program of expansion that—through diplomacy, conquest and theft from its original inhabitants—brought into the ever-expanding Union all the lands east of the Mississippi, then the vast territories of Louisiana, followed by Texas and a third of Mexico, the Pacific Northwest, Alaska, Caribbean and Pacific islands seized from Spain, and the once-independent kingdom of Hawaii. Not to mention the informal economic empire in Latin America, about which a US secretary of state declared in 1895, "today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent, and...its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition."

What once could not be spoken is now taken for granted: The United States possesses an empire, perhaps the most powerful in history.

Our empire did not become global until 1945, when the defeat and the ensuing political and economic collapse of the great imperial powers—Germany, Britain, France

Ronald Steel, the author of Temptations of a Superpower *and other books on US politics and diplomacy, teaches international relations at the University of Southern California.*

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and Japan—shattered the existing global balance. The United States emerged from World War II with overwhelming power and an expansive self-confidence. It had grown enormously richer during the war, shedding the self-doubt and overcoming the economic depression of the 1930s. Backed by a triumphant military machine, it had the capacity and the self-awareness to advance its interests and its values around the globe.

The awareness of the new role that the United States could play was vividly expressed in early 1941 by Henry Luce, months before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought the nation into a two-front war. Americans, wrote the publisher of *Time* and *Life* magazines in an essay he modestly titled "The American Century," must "accept wholeheartedly our duty and our opportunity as the most powerful and vital nation in the world, and in consequence exert upon the world the full impact of our influence, for such purposes as we see fit and by such means as we see fit." Even George W. Bush would not have expressed the sentiment so baldly.

The project was not only political but also territorial, and it took shape, geographer Neil Smith powerfully argues in *American Empire: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization*, as part of a comprehensive global vision dating back to the early decades of the twentieth century. "The American Century, understood as a specific historical period," Smith demonstrates, "was built with an equally specific but largely unseen geography." In this geography of history, he examines the construction of the imperial space through the influence of Isaiah Bowman, the influential geographer who mapped out for Woodrow Wilson the new boundaries of post–World War I Europe, and for Franklin Roosevelt the American presence in post–World War II Europe and its colonies. More than a biography, this is an intellectually invigorating challenge to the assumption that globalism is a process that can be divorced from specific territorial and political objectives.

If the emerging American empire was not based on the formal acquisition of territory, a territorial concept was inherent in the construction of economic and political control. This was the continuation and expansion of the prewar pattern. Following World War I the United States—unlike its French, British and Japanese allies—claimed no spoils from those it had defeated. Instead it focused on economic expansion (and continued suzerainty over Latin America). Its goal then, and now, was a global Open Door for American trade and investment.

Following World War II the conflict over the political and economic orientation of Eastern Europe brought about the confrontation known as the cold war. This challenge offered the opportunity for the United States to reorganize the world according to American interests, principles and values. The project, nourished on a series of real and imagined "crises," was an immensely successful and usually stable one that served the interests of both the United States and the Soviet Union. It guaranteed the global interests of the former and the security needs of the latter. This is in large part why the armed confrontation lasted so long.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, hastened but not caused by the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev, was brought about not by revolution or military defeat, but by the inability of a sclerotic Soviet bureaucracy and economic system to maintain the military balance of the cold war or to provide a decent standard of living for its people. Within the American government this collapse was not viewed as a completely happy development. It undercut much of the justification for the global military, bureaucratic and industrial structures that had been put into place during long decades of alarm and confrontation. Americans began to look for a "peace dividend."

A focus on neglected domestic needs was not to happen, because American foreign policy was not about the Soviet Union. It was, and is, about advancing the economic and political interests of the dominant groups within the United States. Where this project meets resistance, there is no peace, and there can be no peace dividend. This was true throughout the cold war in conflicts like those in Korea, Vietnam and in myriad interventions, coups and proxy wars like those in Guatemala, Iran, Angola, El Salvador, Chile, Brazil, Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Angola, Lebanon and Panama, and continuing through the 1990s in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq. It is also why there was no significant reduction of the military budget—or of American military forces in bases around the globe. The disappearance of the long-term serious rival made no significant difference in the American project for a world conducive to US economic and political goals. But it did restrict the agenda.

The attacks of September 11 brought an end to what we called, for lack of a better term, the post–cold war world. They shattered the sense of invulnerability that Americans had taken for granted. They triggered an intense national anxiety that gave the government a free hand to combat this new threat, along with an open spigot to the Treasury. The "war on terror" became the ideological replacement for the cold war. It too is global in scope, involves enemies hidden among us who challenge our beliefs and values and will use any weapons against us and our allies. It is a war that is said to require a "full spectrum" response, anywhere and everywhere. All this is evident in sweeping new programs of domestic surveillance, rearmament, foreign base expansion and military operations launched by the Bush government. This has provoked

BOOKS DISCUSSED IN THIS ESSAY:

COLOSSUS: The Price of America's Empire. By Niall Ferguson. Penguin. 384 pp. $25.95.

AMERICAN EMPIRE: Roosevelt's Geographer and the Prelude to Globalization. By Neil Smith. California. 557 pp. $39.95.

ROGUE NATION: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions. By Clyde Prestowitz. Basic. 328 pp. $26.

IMPERIAL AMERICA: The Bush Assault on World Order. By John Newhouse. Knopf. 194 pp. $23.

FEAR'S EMPIRE: War, Terror and Democracy. By Benjamin R. Barber. Norton. 220 pp. $23.95.

THE CHOICE: Global Domination or Global Leadership. By Zbigniew Brzezinski. Basic. 242 pp. $25.

AMERICA UNBOUND: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy. By Ivo H. Daalder and James M. Lindsay. Brookings. 246 pp. $22.95.

THE SORROWS OF EMPIRE: Militarism, Secrecy and the End of the Republic. By Chalmers Johnson. Metropolitan. 389 pp. $25.

HEGEMONY OR SURVIVAL: America's Quest for Global Dominance. By Noam Chomsky. Metropolitan. 278 pp. $22.

THE NEW IMPERIALISM. By David Harvey. Oxford. 253 pp. $22.

RESURRECTING EMPIRE: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East. By Rashid Khalidi. Beacon. 224 pp. $23.

INVENTING THE AXIS OF EVIL: The Truth About North Korea, Iran and Syria. By Bruce Cumings, Ervand Abrahamian and Moshe Ma'oz. New Press. 213 pp. $22.95.

INCOHERENT EMPIRE. By Michael Mann. Verso. 278 pp. $25.

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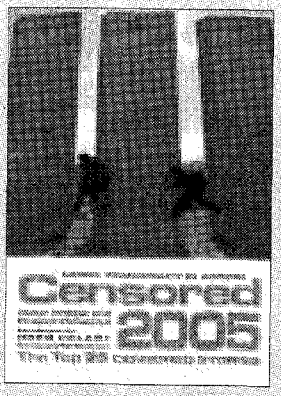

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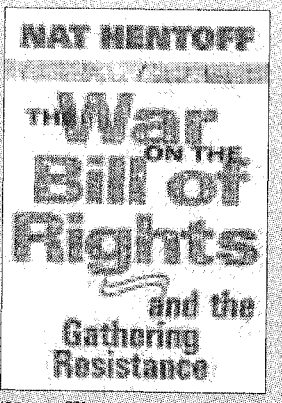

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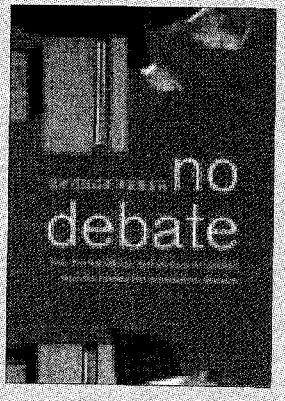

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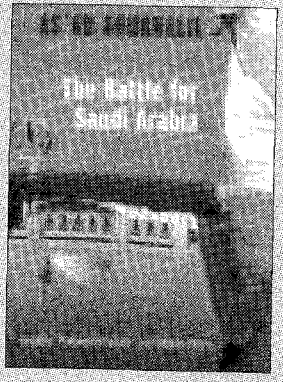

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"Ralph Nader is a genuine American wonder, someone who still believes in democracy deeply enough to challenge the corporate powers that have taken it away from us. He's a role model, a pioneer."
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not only an immense outcry at home and abroad but a remarkable profusion of books analyzing what virtually no one any longer hesitates to describe as America's imperial adventure.

These books are of two kinds. First there are those that benignly view George W. Bush's initiatives as a radical departure from an American foreign policy based on multilateralism, alliances and consensus. Then there are those that see it as a manifestation of the policies of expansion and unilateralism that are inherent in a long-standing imperial project. The former approach is evidenced in a series of lamentations from within what could be called the foreign policy "community" of journalists, scholars, think-tank analysts and former government officials who are distressed by the Bush Administration's crude style and its egregious alienation of old allies. Although many are liberals, some are conservatives, in the old bipartisan sense of the term. Their complaints show a serious degree of rumbling within the American establishment.

Take Clyde Prestowitz, for example. Here is a conservative economic analyst who served in the government under Reagan and describes Bush's foreign policy as not conservative at all but dangerously radical. Denouncing the Administration for its unilateralism, militarism, alienation of traditional allies and contempt for international institutions and agreements, he even titles his book *Rogue Nation* (though with the qualifying subtitle *American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions*). While this dissonance may be standard fare on the left, it is a sign of real distress coming from the moderate right that shows cracks in the old foreign policy consensus.

A similar sense of alienation is displayed with brio by veteran journalist John Newhouse in *Imperial America: The Bush Assault on the World Order*. A Washington insider with ready access to policy-makers, Newhouse shows how Bush and Cheney's preoccupation with Saddam Hussein dominated an agenda already heavy with more serious issues in such places as Pakistan, Kashmir and the Arab-Israeli fuse box, not to mention the botched "war on terror." The greatest value of this short book lies in the author's sure sense of the play of politics and personalities in the imperial capital, and of how a band of zealots has taken over the controls of the ship of state.

Benjamin Barber's *Fear's Empire* is not so much about fear as it is an attack on those "eagles" in the Bush Administration, headed by a President eager to apply "missionary rationales for and military solutions to the challenges to global insecurity," whose "self-righteous wrath is steeped in the lore of American exceptionalism." In place of the doctrine of preventive war Barber proposes a "preventive democracy" based on law, cooperative alliances and internationalism. His is a worthy prescription, but one unlikely to make much impact on policy-makers either within the Administration or on the outside seeking to replace it.

No one exemplifies the centrist foreign-policy consensus better than Zbigniew Brzezinski. National Security Adviser to Jimmy Carter, cold war hawk, conservative Democrat, hardball bureaucratic player, he understands power and is not averse to applying it. Neither on the right nor the left, he is an experienced and intelligent foreign policy professional. It is therefore the impeccable provenance of *The Choice* rather than its tame prescription that makes his critique interesting. Like the internationalist that he is, Brzezinski takes the Bush Administration to task for its unilateralism and its adventurism. This book clearly shows trouble brewing within the establishment. Whether this has any effect on policy remains to be seen. The most disturbing question he raises—though, unfortunately, without pursuing it—is whether the current drive for "global hegemony could endanger American democracy itself."

Bush strikes a discordant key, but he sings a familiar tune, and it is not likely to change regardless of who wins in November.

What is most striking about these expressions of alarm from home and abroad is the Bush Administration's indifference to them. What critics disparage as messianism, contempt for the opinion of others, unilateralism, arrogance and an emphasis on military force are what George W. Bush views as righteous patriotism. That is the central message of *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in Foreign Policy*. Rejecting the popular assumption that it is Dick Cheney, or the gaggle of neocons perched in the Pentagon, or Bible-thumping preachers who set the agenda, Ivo Daalder and James Lindsay energetically argue that Bush is a man sure of his convictions and with little concern for those whose sensibilities he may offend.

The authors, former Clinton staffers currently at Washington think tanks, portray Bush as an intelligent man who believes that because America's (i.e., his own) motives are only to spread freedom and peace, he must follow his own way unconstricted by international protocols or the opinions of others. "At some point we may be the only ones left," as Bush has acknowledged. "That's OK with me. We are America." In Daalder and Lindsay's view, Bush is governed by his convictions that the world is dangerous, that power exercised in a just cause need suffer no restraints, that a determined will is crucial to the exercise of power and that treaties and accords matter only insofar as they clearly serve American interests.

While all may not share their high estimation of Bush's intelligence, for those seeking to understand the Bush foreign policy and not merely to denounce it, this informative book will be highly useful. In the authors' view he is nobody's puppet, but rather the architect of his foreign policy—whatever one may think of that policy. Although they make a spirited argument, they are unlikely to persuade radical critics who see the current policy not as an aberration of a single team or individual but as a heavy-handed manifestation of a longstanding imperial project. For them the problem is not Bush but the structure of American capitalism and the militarism that produces, and indeed requires, such policies.

In *The Sorrows of Empire* Chalmers Johnson expands the analysis of *Blowback*, his earlier study of the unintended consequences of American overseas activities, to examine the global imperial agenda. He is particularly instructive in this enormously useful study on the structure of secret programs abroad financed through "black budgets," on "humanitarian imperialism" as a pretext for global intervention, on the institutions of American militarism, on the hidden agendas of globalization, on the private military contractors who build and run the overseas bases and prisons, on the actual structure and operations of the more than 725 American bases around the world, on the politics of oil and gas in the Caspian Basin and on the dominant political, military and economic presence in the states of the Persian Gulf. This highly useful study is a fine guide to the way the empire works.

Noam Chomsky, who has produced a shelf of books on the subject of American imperialism, may no longer be able to surprise. But he does have the ability to zero in unerringly on the lies and distortions the government uses to sell its policies, and on the realities ignored or buried by the media. In *Hegemony or Survival* he argues that America's effort to "maintain its global dominance and military suprem-

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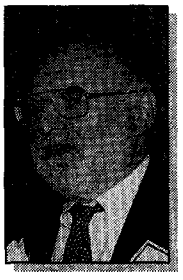

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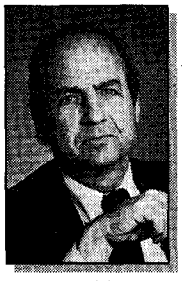

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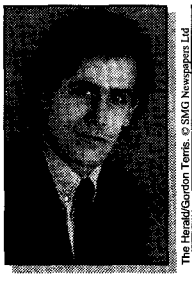

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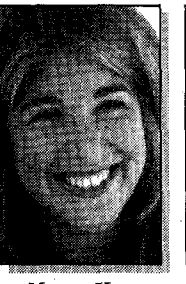

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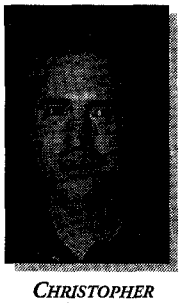

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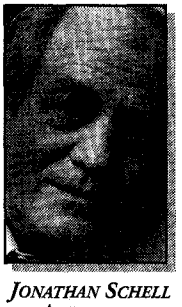

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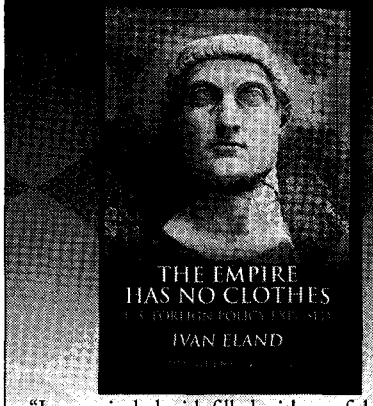

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acy forever" threatens human survival. While this apocalyptic scenario may seem a long stretch to many, the book, with its wealth of information, is a thoughtful, well-argued antidote to the conventional wisdom. Chomsky, whether one agrees with him or not, is a national resource, never afraid to challenge power, and is solidly within the honored tradition of American radicalism.

In a similar mode of accusation David Harvey, a scholar of anthropology and geography, charges in *The New Imperialism* that the Bush Administration has used the Iraq war to implement its "geopolitical vision...to control the whole globe militarily and, through oil, economically." This stylistically dense essay is neo-Marxist in tone and mode of analysis. But Harvey also has a practical sense of politics and recognizes that a "more benevolent imperial trajectory than the raw militaristic imperialism currently offered up by the neoconservative movement" will come, if at all, not from without but from within, and that "anti-Americanism from the rest of the world will not and cannot help."

For a specific investigation of the region that so puzzles and troubles our policy-makers, a good place to start is Rashid Khalidi's *Resurrecting Empire*. With a deep knowledge of the Middle East and a felicitous literary style, Khalidi, a professor of Middle Eastern history at Columbia University, examines the history of US involvement in the area against the backdrop of European colonialism and shows why an assertion of our good intentions has little meaning for peoples who have known two centuries of foreign occupation and domination. He also provides helpful insights into the geostrategic and geoeconomic interests that lie at the heart of the mounting conflict between Islam and the West. Linking America's role today to that of its European imperial predecessors, he argues that the central problem is the "irresoluble contradiction between the imperial center's absolute need for control...and the irrepressible desire of the peoples of the Middle East to throw off that control."

While the struggle between these forces may go on for a long time, it seems unlikely to involve any more Iraq-style adventures in the foreseeable future. Imperial fatigue has already set in among Americans, and economic bankruptcy looms on the horizon as the price for a global War Against Evil. There were "no more Vietnams" after the US foreign policy establishment was bloodied by that colonial adventure, and there are unlikely to be any more Iraqs now that the Administration's tortured case for the current war has fallen apart. Targeted nations like North Korea, Iran and Syria—so authoritatively analyzed, respectively, by Bruce Cumings, Ervand Abrahamian and Moshe Ma'oz in their informative study *Inventing the Axis of Evil*—may have to self-destruct on their own.

Amid a welter of books denouncing America's newly acknowledged empire, it is refreshing to come across one so brazenly celebratory as *Colossus*. Niall Ferguson is one of the talented band of itinerant Britons who yearn for the empire their fathers and grandfathers lost, and who have migrated to the United States in search of one to which they can attach themselves. Their enthusiasm for the United States to assume its "imperial responsibilities" is reflected in their ardent support for the Iraq war and their impatience with, even their scorn for, the doubters. They play that role much better than the dour promoters and strategists within the Bush Administration.

Although this book, partially stitched together from journalistic pieces, has a patchy feel, it makes its case for a "liberal empire" with a certain zest. Imperial control by a distant power, Ferguson tells us, is a good thing for some new and untidy countries. It teaches them how to run a decent and efficient state. If the instruction has not worked so well in certain former European colonies, that is because "even the best institutions work less well in landlocked, excessively hot or disease-ridden places." And what are we to make of cool and sanitary places like Russia, where democratic institutions also don't seem to work very well?

But even if empire is supposedly good for those on the receiving end, Ferguson has little hope that the United States is up to the task of bestowing the favor. Not only does it lack the will, he tells us, it suffers from an economy weighed down by excessive spending on Medicare and Social Security (though not, he reassures us, on the Pentagon's weapons). "Imposing democracy on all the world's rogue states" would not seriously strain the US military budget, he argues, but Americans are too soft and selfish to get their priorities straight. They apparently don't want to spend their careers administering natives in sticky and unsanitary places. They lack an imperial frame of mind. And so, he laments, the nascent American empire that began so promisingly is likely to end in an untidy and self-indulgent recessional.

This, without the lamentations, is pretty

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much the judgment of Michael Mann, a sociologist who shares Ferguson's land of birth but not his imperial nostalgia. In *Incoherent Empire*, Mann sees his adopted land not as the little train that shouldn't, but as the train that will soon find that it couldn't. The problem, he believes, arises not from the rise of another ambitious great power or from imperial overstretch, as some critics have predicted, but from uneven power resources that will lead to "imperial incoherence and foreign policy failure." The United States would be in "no significant danger," he says, if it stopped "seeking to drive into the ground the few failing communist remnants in the world, seeking extra-territorial control over oil supplies, stationing American troops where they have no business, invading foreign countries uninvited, and supporting state terrorists."

Well, he may be right. But extending their area of influence and control is what great powers do. It is also what small powers try to do when they can. To behave otherwise might be commendable, but it would also mean a revolutionary change in American foreign policy. George W. Bush may be more crude in his language and his methods than previous Presidents, but he is following the same road map. It will take more than exhortation to persuade him or his successors to do otherwise.

Indeed, it will be extremely difficult, if even possible, to behave dramatically differently. Style is one thing, substance another. Bush offends by his style. He enjoys confrontation and the humiliation of those opposed to his will. Consider his treatment of old allies like the French and Germans in the run-up to the Iraq war. Another President, like John F. Kennedy, would have put the mailed fist in a smooth glove. Yet this, with more nuance, will likely be the path pursued by John Kerry should he succeed Bush. Both his campaign speeches and his choice of advisers reaffirm an imperial role. The difference is a matter of style.

The United States today is what it is, and has been at least since 1945: a great imperial power with global interests to protect and advance. George W. Bush strikes a discordant key. Yet in most respects he sings the familiar tune, and it is unlikely to change in any major way, regardless of who occupies the White House, until the tectonic plates of the global power equation have moved into a new alignment. In the meantime, what we may have most to fear is not major war or crippling terrorist attacks but, as Brzezinski has warned, whether "global hegemony could endanger American democracy itself." ■

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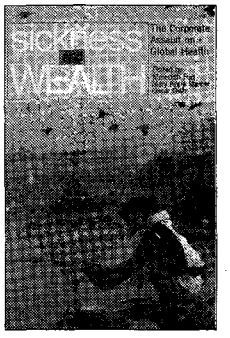

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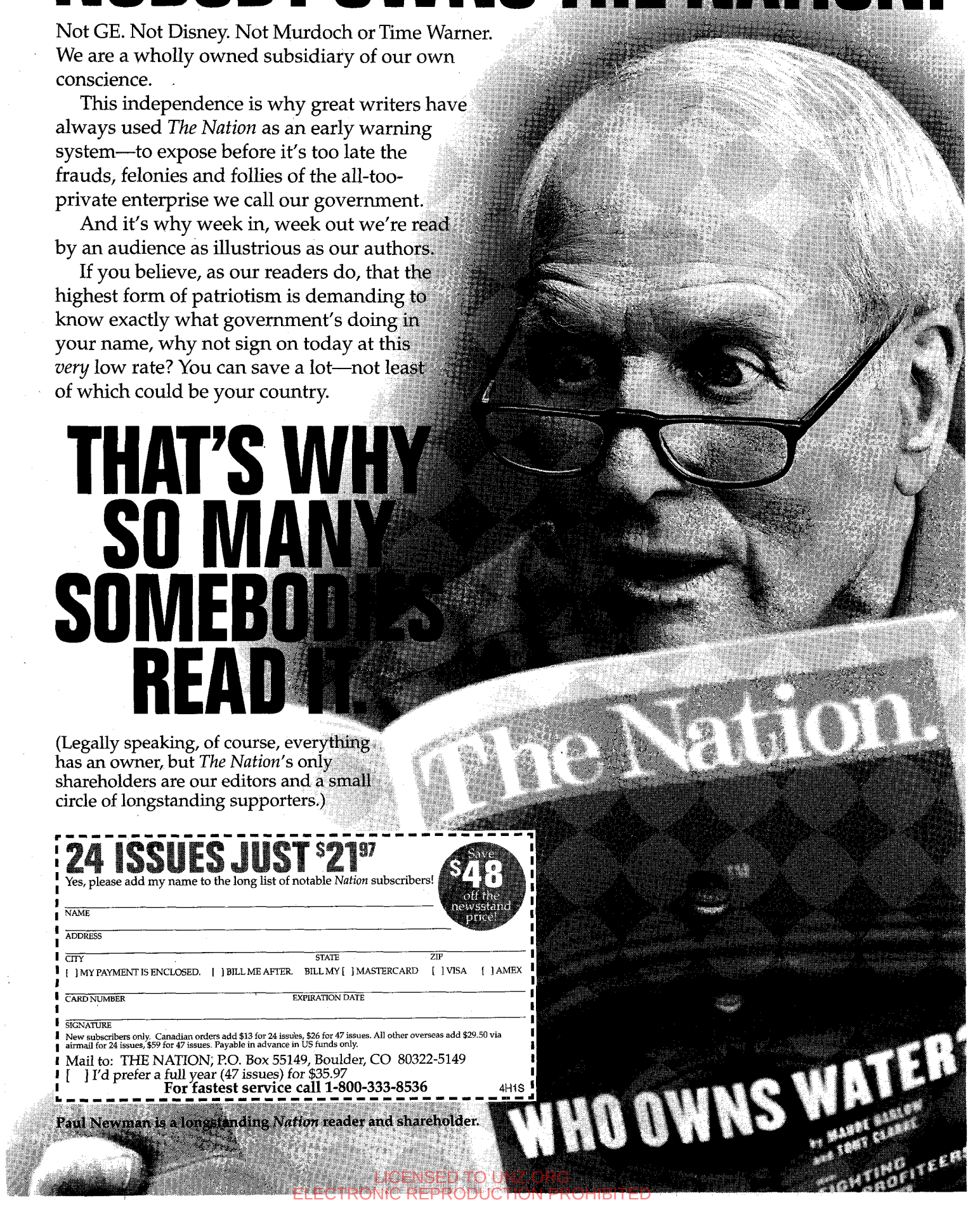

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The Poverty of Theory

LINDA COLLEY

THE ROADS TO MODERNITY: The British, French, and American Enlightenments.
By Gertrude Himmelfarb. Knopf. 284 pp. $25.

Gertrude Himmelfarb is a remarkable woman. Remarkable, first, because in some respects she is a pioneer. Born in 1922, she has always retained her own name, and has combined raising a family on both sides of the Atlantic with writing and editing (thus far) seventeen books. And while the direction of her intellectual life journey—from the far left to the activist right—is scarcely an unusual one, few women of her generation have adopted this route with anything like as much conviction, success and aplomb. She met her husband, Irving Kristol, at a Trotskyist political meeting in Brooklyn in the 1930s and wrote her master's thesis on the French revolutionary leader Maximilien Robespierre. Since then, however, she has gone on to earn praise from Newt Gingrich, lecture in front of Margaret Thatcher and collaborate with Lynne Cheney.

As this suggests, Himmelfarb is not simply a historian. Since the 1980s, especially, she has been a conspicuous and sometimes pugnacious cultural critic and commentator on public affairs. How she views her role is suggested by a remark she once made about Lionel Trilling, a friend and an intellectual model. Trilling, she wrote in *On Looking Into the Abyss* (1994), "was able to resist the insidious ideological and political fashions of his time without the coarsening of mind that often comes with doing battle, and also without the timidity and equivocation that retreats from battle in an excess of fastidiousness." This latter quality is emphatically not one of her own failings, at least not in the face of perceived enemies on the left within academia and outside it.

Thus when social history was still fashionable, she attacked its more extreme exponents for having a "valet-like conception" of the past that lent itself to "denigration of greatness and heroism." When poststructural literary criticism was in vogue, she accused some of its better- known practitioners of convoluted thought and convoluted prose. And she has since taken on postmodernist historians, claiming that they deconstruct the "texts" of the past and the "texts" of previous historians so as to create a tabula rasa upon which to impose their own radical agendas: a strategy tantamount, as she sees it, to "a repudiation of the historical enterprise as it has been understood and practiced until very recently," which she does not mean as a compliment.

These polemics have been combined with more academic writings of a distinctive and unusual type. Over and over again, Himmelfarb has chosen to focus on Britain's past, especially on its intellectual history, with a view to commenting as well on America's present. She adopts this tactic once more in *The Roads to Modernity*.

It is, according to her publishers, a "revisionist history" aiming—among other things—to wrest prime credit for the Enlightenment from France and its *philosophes* by demonstrating the massive contribution of eighteenth-century British thinkers. As Himmelfarb herself concedes, she is pushing at an open door. To be sure, Peter Gay's highly influential masterwork *The Enlightenment* (1967) reinforced a preexisting tendency to view this as a single, pre-eminently French phenomenon, but in recent decades much has changed. J.G.A. Pocock has wisely urged the abandonment of the definite article and an exploration instead of Enlightenments. Recognition that many nations were implicated in the movement in very different ways has been accompanied by the argument that—even in the same country—plural manifestations of Enlightenment could coexist. Thus, in Robert Darnton's vivid reinterpretation, even in France it was never simply a case of Olympian figures like Voltaire or Diderot running the show; Grub Street was involved too: the aspiring, the failures, the hacks. This wider process of revision has helped make possible a radical and highly flattering reassessment of the British experience as a whole. The late Roy Porter made the case triumphantly in his *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World* (2000). "To speak of enlightenment in Britain," he argued, "does not merely make sense; not to do so would be nonsense."

To an extent, *The Roads to Modernity* introduces Porter's arguments to a wider American audience. Like him, Himmelfarb contends that British Enlightenment actors were different from their counterparts across the Channel (though no less important) because they did not need to view themselves as a persecuted, rebellious minority. The political revolutions of the 1640s and 1688 and dynastic change in 1714 had already circumscribed the power and mystique of the British monarchy. The Toleration Act of 1689 insured freedom of worship and education to most British and Irish Protestants (Catholics had a much harder time of it). After the lapsing of the Licensing Act in 1695, the British press was arguably the freest and most diverse in the world, while London was the West's largest, richest and most vibrant capital. Accordingly, most British writers and intellectuals—at least before 1775—did not feel an overwhelming compulsion to challenge church and state along the lines of *Écrasez l'infâme*. They could relax into profitable and innovative exploration of other ideas and causes.

For Himmelfarb, one of their prime concerns was to insist upon the social importance of public spirit, morality and compassion. The French might be obsessed in their Old European fashion with reason, but the British focused upon virtue. Thus the Earl of Shaftesbury in his *Inquiry concerning virtue, or merit* (1699), insisted upon the importance of man's "natural affection for his own kind." While in his *Theory of Modern Sentiments* (1759), which was once as well-known as *The Wealth of Nations*, Adam Smith dwelt on the importance of sympathy for an unfortunate individual as a spur to benevolence: "We enter, as it were, into his body and become in some measure the same person with him." Edmund Burke, too, she insists—quite correctly—was an Enlightenment figure caught up in the debate about the nature and advancement of public virtue. He may have denounced the radicals of the French Revolution, but he was steadfast in opposing British excesses in India, not because he was anti-imperialist (he was not) but rather because he believed in the possibility of a benevolent imperialism.

Himmelfarb is at her most original, however, in her discussion of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley. High Tory, an opponent of the American Revolution, a charismatic preacher convinced that the Devil took corporeal form, he seems at first

Linda Colley is the Shelby M.C. Davis 1958 Professor of History at Princeton. Her most recent book is Captives: Britain, Empire, and the World, 1600–1850 *(Pantheon).*

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glance the very antithesis of what the Enlightenment was about. But like many scholars now, Himmelfarb insists that piety and this new intellectual sensibility proved compatible, and she draws attention to some of the other facets of this extraordinary man. He was well-read, poring over history and philosophy books while on horseback. He was a fierce opponent of the slave trade, and he desperately wanted to give the poor at home a better sense of their own worth. Wesley's commitment to teaching poor children to "read, write, and cast accounts" was typical, she believes, of the British Enlightenment's interest in widening access to education, one of the many things that distinguished it from its French counterpart. For while the *philosophes* espoused reform in the abstract, they had, she argues, "little thought left, and even less sympathy, for the common people."

As this latter, rather sweeping judgment suggests, *The Roads to Modernity* is a political tract as well as a history book, and it is also an argument about America. Himmelfarb concedes that France's Enlightenment was not responsible for all the violence and viciousness of its Revolution, but insists that "there were unmistakable echoes of the *philosophes*...at every stage." America's Revolution, however, was utterly different from and infinitely better than this ugly sister conflict and much indebted to the British version of Enlightenment. Moreover, this influence has persisted and been of momentous importance: "If America is now exceptional, it is because it is has inherited and preserved aspects of the British Enlightenment that the British themselves have discarded and that other countries (France, most notably) have never adopted."

All this is an interesting amalgam of very new and very old polemics. By insisting that America still bears the benevolent impress of the Enlightenment, Himmelfarb is clearly directing her fire at one level against those postmodernists who have sought to disparage or dismiss the movement. At another level, she is continuing a debate over the respective merits of the two great eighteenth-century Western revolutions that has been ongoing since 1789. Thus for John Quincy Adams, it was vital to rescue America's revolution "from the disgraceful imputation of having proceeded from the same principles as the French." By contrast, Jefferson famously took a more relaxed view of violent revolution, observing even before 1789 that "the tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." As is also true of Himmelfarb's book now, such disputes in the past owed as much to political partisanship as to concern with the nuances of history. For what is arguably striking about Britain, France and America in the eighteenth century—and remains true today—is less their undeniable differences than the degree to which they were nonetheless closely interconnected.

So while it is true that American revolutionaries derived many of their ideas from Britain's Enlightenment, it is no less true that without French support the former might never have won. But the connections between these sister republics go much deeper. Both the American and French revolutions were concerned with popular sovereignty, nationalism, the rights of man (less so women) and republicanism. Moreover, both epic struggles possessed an imperial dimension. Its military violence and empire-building after 1789 are often used by critics to downgrade France's revolution, but 1776 generated its own brand of violence and imperialism that is still too often forgotten or glossed over. Himmelfarb's discussion here of how newly independent America dealt with slavery and the Native American population—its "problems," as she calls them—is decidedly queasy. "The native occupations of hunting and subsistence farming were incompatible with a more sophisticated agricultural economy," she remarks. Well, that's all right then.

Of course, the American Revolution was a great event of global significance, but it had its shadow side. Here, though, Himmelfarb is too ready to focus only on what is bright in the American record and indeed in the British record, while doing less than justice to France's achievements. Thus she has wise things to say about British Enlightenment benevolence and sensibility, but scarcely mentions Britain's slave trade. Nor does she mention that it was a French Enlightenment figure, Abbé Guillaume Raynal, who wrote perhaps the most wide-ranging critique of the West's overseas empires and slave-trading systems. By the same token, she makes much of what she views as the *philosophes*' excessive cult of reason. But a main argument of Voltaire's *Candide*, a classic of the French Enlightenment, is that pure reason divorced from sensitivity and experience leads all too easily to error, absurdity and indifference to human suffering.

For all its intelligence and historical scholarship, this book reflects a current conservative worldview that is at once depressing and deeply unfortunate. Here, in these pages, is plucky little Britain doing its bit for the Enlightenment but naturally passing the torch to an even better America,

At the Border

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You can't bring gifts back, however modest,
Can't even pass a note to a few friends
That suggests what worries of theirs are misguided,
What expectations too ambitious.

Are you sure you're ready to leave,
To cross the bridge that begins
Under a clear sky and ends in fog?
But look, you've started across already
And it's one lane wide, with no room for U-turns.

No time even to pause as drivers behind you
Lean on their horns, those who've convinced themselves
Their home awaits them on the other side.

Carl Dennis

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while France invariably gets it wrong. But this won't do, either as a description of the past or a strategy for the present. America, Britain and France are all remarkable countries. Over the past few centuries, all three of them (and many other countries) have generated important arguments for liberty and human betterment, and done wonderful things. All three have also been conspicuously warlike, imperial and at different times guilty of genocide. For Americans, British and French to snipe at one another's undoubted faults and failings is therefore a singularly pointless and—given our current global challenges—very dangerous indulgence. Much better that we work together in defense of enlightenment. ■

The Burden of Memory

MELINE TOUMANI

THE BURNING TIGRIS: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response.
By Peter Balakian. HarperCollins. 475 pp. $26.95.

MODERN ARMENIA: People, Nation, State.
By Gerard J. Libaridian. Transaction. 327 pp. $39.95.

Perhaps you noticed them in the main square of your town this year—or last year, or any year you've been alive, in any town where you've ever lived: a group of people solemnly assembled, a priest in a peaked hood, probably a children's choir and definitely two or three elected officials. It is April 24, and the crowd has gathered to commemorate the genocide that began on that date in 1915, in which 1.5 million Armenians living in Eastern Turkey were killed by order of the Ottoman government. A master of ceremonies reports the latest tally of how many countries have passed resolutions commemorating the Armenian genocide, and how many newspapers have used the word "genocide" instead of the less politically charged "mass killings" to characterize the tragedy. A few centenarians—the last of the genocide survivors—hobble onto a platform while the crowd observes a moment of silence. The priest prays, the choir sings and a Congressman scans his notes and assures the Armenians that their contributions to American society are indispensable.

After eighty-nine years, April 24 rituals in Armenian communities around the world have become as reliable as time itself. Their endurance is a response to the Turkish government's persistent refusal to acknowledge the crimes of its predecessors. Although most historians outside Turkey consider the Armenian genocide to have been the first genocide of the twentieth century—an atrocity whose rigorous planning and execution inspired Hitler—official Turkish history alleges that any killings that took place were merely side effects of World War I, that Turks were also killed by Armenians, and that Armenians colluded with Russian forces, posing a security threat. To propagate this version of the story, Turkey has hidden documents, blackmailed universities (including elite US schools) and filled library shelves worldwide with fraudulent histories. Only a few prominent historians question whether Turkey's actions constituted genocide, most notoriously Princeton's Bernard Lewis, who was condemned by a Paris court in 1995 for "hiding elements which go against his thesis—that there was no 'serious proof' of the Armenian Genocide."

Those Armenians whose grandparents were forced from their homes and marched to death camps in the Syrian desert are, understandably, not interested in having a debate on the kaleidoscopic possibilities of historical interpretation. They want high-level condemnation of the atrocities their loved ones suffered. Some, ultimately, want reparations. But Turkey has thus far managed to prevent any US administration from passing an official resolution calling the events of 1915 genocide by threatening to cut access to strategic border zones. Meanwhile, Canada, France and other countries have ignored such threats and recognized the Armenian genocide.

For Armenians in the diaspora—a diaspora largely created by the genocide—the quest for Turkish government recognition has become a raison d'être and a powerful unifying issue for a community that otherwise contains many subdivisions that vary

Meline Toumani is a writer living in Brooklyn.

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by degree of assimilation and allegiance to different host countries.

The collective energy of the Armenian diaspora is what made Peter Balakian's book *The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America's Response*, an unlikely bestseller for a few weeks last fall. *The Burning Tigris* describes how Americans in the first half of the twentieth century were deeply engaged in efforts to help "the starving Armenians" in the wake of their catastrophe. But the distinctive merits of Balakian's book had little to do with its commercial success. The reason was that Armenian-Americans spent much of last year running an intensive e-mail campaign to garner pre-orders for the book on Amazon.com. A sufficiently high number of pre-orders would push the book into multiple printings early on and guarantee a high ranking. The campaign worked, as Armenians worldwide placed orders for one, two, three or twenty copies. Favorable reviews abounded. (A similar publicity crusade boosted Atom Egoyan's 2002 film, *Ararat*, the first-ever feature film about the Armenian genocide.)

With *The Burning Tigris*, Balakian, a poet and the author of a highly praised memoir about the genocide, *Black Dog of Fate*, resuscitated a discourse that has been comatose for decades. While Armenian-American lobbyists work year after year to convince governments and journalists to acknowledge the genocide officially, Balakian launches into his book with no discussion of Turkey's denial (which he saves for the epilogue). Instead, he tells a remarkable story of how the Armenian Cause became a pet project for the American cultural elite of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Armenian tragedy is thus folded into a dramatic narrative of romance and political intrigue, starring heroic Americans, not suffering Armenians.

The brilliance of Balakian's project—and its undoubted PR value to the Armenian diaspora lobby—is that it portrays the genocide concern as a quintessentially American issue rather than a special interest that Americans should feel guilty for ignoring. Indeed, following the success of *The Burning Tigris*, Balakian (along with Pulitzer Prize–winning author Samantha Power and Robert Melson, a scholar and Holocaust survivor) helped convince the *New York Times* to change its longstanding policy against using the word "genocide" to describe the Armenian events. (*The Burning Tigris* details the reports about the Armenian genocide that appeared on that paper's front pages while the massacres were taking place.)

But the novelty of its narrative notwithstanding, *The Burning Tigris* cannot escape becoming yet another artifact in what the young scholar Lisa Siraganian has called "the fetish-culture of diasporan Armenians." In this culture, many diaspora Armenians are reared to hate Turkey with a fervor that seems completely at odds with their daily lives as typical—even liberal—American citizens. Clothes with "Made in Turkey" labels are put back on the rack, Turkish restaurants are avoided and a vacation in Istanbul is shunned by even the most adventurous travelers. At Armenian summer camps and youth groups, third-generation Armenian-Americans who don't speak Armenian and have never seen Armenia learn to perpetuate this legacy. Many are descendants of genocide survivors, but often it is the later-generation descendants who take up the cause most ardently, suggesting that something besides a simple interest in justice fuels their behavior. In the face of the distress of assimilation, the glory of a shared victimhood is seductive indeed, especially when it can be attained without having actually suffered.

Sociologist Anny Bakalian has called the quest for genocide recognition a sine qua non for the Armenian community in America. A literal grasp of her words calls to mind a scene from George Steiner's controversial novel *The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H.* In a provocative climax, Steiner's Adolf Hitler character suggests that Jews should be grateful to him for having catalyzed the fulfillment of the Zionist dream. A similar tragic paradox underlies the Armenian situation: Without the shared sense of purpose afforded by the pursuit of Turkish recognition, would the Armenian diaspora simply assimilate and disappear? In other words, is Turkey's denial the diaspora's lifeblood?

The enthusiasm surrounding the release of *The Burning Tigris* was a reminder that the needs of the diaspora, which lives in the shadow of the history that defined it, differ from—and sometimes clash with—those of the 3 million citizens of Armenia, who live for their own future. So what about that little piece of land in the Caucasus where Amazon.com doesn't often deliver?

In Armenia itself, Turkish denial of the genocide barely registers as a concern among the citizens of the tiny republic, who are lucky if they get through each day with enough running water and electricity to put dinner on the table. Armenians are not indifferent toward the genocide, or to

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Turkey's denial of it, but the historical tragedy has been supplanted in their imaginations by the demands of day-to-day life. Since 1988, when a terrible earthquake killed 50,000 Armenians and left one in ten citizens homeless, the country has endured relentless suffering. The collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in food and power shortages during the harsh winters of the early 1990s, and simultaneously the war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh felled many, severely drained resources and sparked a refugee crisis.

At the train station in the capital city of Yerevan, the hardships of daily life are on full display. The train platform, which used to bustle with travelers, is now the site of a chaotic outdoor market that has spread across most of the platform and surrounding grounds. Vendors from the outskirts of Yerevan entreat passersby to pick up a few peaches, a light bulb or some plastic shoes. It is the clearance sale of all the city's bazaars, and not in a good way.

Inside the silent station hall, a dust-shielded board lists distant cities that Armenians could have visited in the past; virtually any place of interest in the Soviet sprawl was once accessible by rail. But the only place the train now goes outside Armenia is to neighboring Georgia, an equally rocky country that is larger than Armenia, almost as ancient and at least as poor. Eighty-five percent of Armenia's possible ground access to the outside world is closed due to blockades imposed by Turkey on the west and Azerbaijan on the east. The small gap in the precipitous mountain border that Armenia shares with its friendliest neighbor, Iran, is best traversed in a tiny Niva, Russia's answer to the Jeep.

But the trunk of a car can hold only so much for market, which is why Armenia's economy is so effectively strangled by the Turkish and Azeri blockades; they curtail cargo transport and the development of import and export relationships in all directions. The World Bank estimates that these blockades have an impact of up to $1.1 billion a year on Armenia. If the blockades were lifted, according to the bank, Armenia's GDP—currently at $3,770 per capita—could increase by 10–18 percent, and Armenia's exports could double.

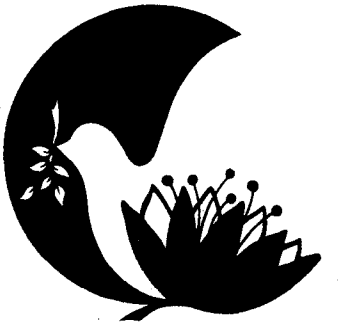
Azerbaijan closed its border with Armenia in 1991, when Armenian and Azeri forces began fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh, a territory geographically encompassed by Azerbaijan but historically populated by Armenians. A bloody ground war ensued, and Armenia won control of Nagorno-Karabakh as well as several surrounding districts. A cease-fire in 1994 ended the fighting, but a real resolution has yet to be reached. As Azerbaijan's next of kin, Turkey closed its border with Armenia in 1993 to protest the Armenian occupation of Nagorno-Karabakh.

In *Modern Armenia: People, Nation, State*, Gerard Libaridian describes how relations between Armenia and Turkey have shifted in the years since 1991, when Armenia became an independent state. In a refreshingly balanced analysis, Libaridian examines Armenia and Turkey as states with clear needs and interests, and argues that pressure from the Armenian diaspora has long complicated the efforts of the two neighbors to establish ties. Libaridian, currently a visiting professor at the University of Michigan, was a foreign policy adviser to the president of Armenia from 1991 to 1997; his direct involvement in negotiations gives him the credibility to present views that will be unappealing to many diaspora Armenians.

After Armenia gained independence, the leading party, the Armenian National Movement (ANM), under then-President Levon Ter-Petrossian, decided that genocide recognition could not be a condition for Armenia's relationship with Turkey. "Obviously this policy was not due to a lack of knowledge of history within the ANM," Libaridian writes, noting that Ter-Petrossian himself was a historian; his views did not reflect "the absence of an appreciation of the significance of the genocide" but a difference in "how to imagine the future."

Thus began what Libaridian calls "the battle for the soul of the new republic." Ter-Petrossian was vilified by critics in the diaspora for his refusal to give priority to genocide recognition, and for banning the ARF party, a militant political group with strong diaspora ties. (My own memories of the Ter-Petrossian years include stories of Armenian-American children chanting "Death to LTP!" at ARF gatherings in suburban New England—LTP being the preferred moniker of disrespect for the president among diaspora malcontents.)

Libaridian offers an especially perceptive analysis of Turkish diplomats during Ter-Petrossian's years in office. Challenging the widely held anti-Turkish sentiments of his diaspora peers, Libaridian reminds readers that the Turkish administration was made up of people whose close colleagues had been assassinated by Armenian terrorists—mostly diaspora Armenians, some descended from genocide survivors—between 1975 and 1983. More than thirty Turkish diplomats and bystanders were killed in bombings and assassinations. "It left a deep impression on the Turkish state and defined its view of Armenians, espe-



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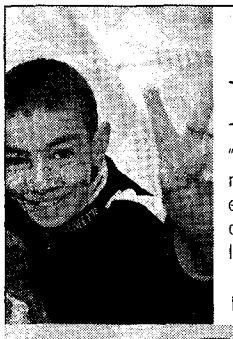

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cially in the mind of the foreign policy establishment." Libaridian notes this not as an apologist but as a strategist.

He also explains that until the Soviet Union came apart, Turkish officials never thought of Armenia as a state. They thought only of Armenians, a cultural group that, in their estimation, consisted of a handful of crazed terrorists and an aggressive diaspora that relentlessly condemned Turkey. "It took them a while to start thinking of Armenia as an independent country," says Libaridian. "This was a serious problem."

This leap of imagination was not Turkey's challenge alone; the diaspora, too, had to get used to the idea of an Armenian state. Until 1991, the diaspora could be a cultural and political surrogate for a republic restricted by Soviet policies. And while the diaspora had no need of friendly relations with Turkey, Armenia, facing the requirements of statehood, desperately needed the economic and security benefits guaranteed by diplomatic ties with a neighbor. Armenia's leaders as well as its regular citizens had the biggest challenge of all: making the psychological transition from being Moscow's smallest child to setting up a house of their own.

When Robert Kocharian became president in 1998, he immediately sought to reel in an alienated diaspora. Kocharian has not insisted on genocide recognition, but in a nod to diaspora demands, he has put the issue on the negotiating table. He has also welcomed the ARF back to Armenia, and established more formal relations with other diaspora organizations.

Kocharian's approach is not surprising, considering that diaspora Armenians currently provide about one-third of Armenia's GDP by way of donations, investments and development programs of every imaginable variety. Walk around Yerevan with locals, and they will readily tell you which diaspora billionaire built that new road up ahead, or the new museum that will tower over the city, or various new schools, hospitals and homes that gleam against the capital's crumbly backdrop. In summertime, repatriates and visitors from the diaspora fill the streets and spend money on a healthy quantity of crafts and jewelry, not to mention food, hotel rooms and services.

Analysts in Armenia and the diaspora are divided into two camps: those who believe Armenia can build a sustainable economy based solely on diaspora support, and those who believe an open border with Turkey is critical to a functioning economy. But would the diaspora keep sending money if Armenia didn't indulge its quest for genocide recognition? And if it weren't for the diaspora's demands, might Turkey long ago have opened its border and allowed for the kind of long-term economic development that Armenia needs? Turkey's official stance now is that the opening of the border is tied to resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict; but over the years diaspora activities have shaped the diplomatic environment in which the negotiations have taken place.

In the battle for the soul of the republic, Kocharian's administration is in an awkward bind, forced to seek diaspora funding and thus obliged to tolerate the diaspora's unique psychological demands—which, though they are born of good intentions, are not necessarily in Armenia's best interests. Indeed, according to Libaridian, officials in Armenia would rather not encourage a nation of victims. "What is this?" he asked in a recent interview, adopting the perspective of an Armenian official. "We respect, we mourn, but we don't want a bunch of citizens who live for and identify themselves as victims in history. We have won a war."

What, then, does a disgruntled diplomat offer as an alternative? "The best way to commemorate the victims of the genocide is to live, survive and progress, to give an opportunity to the new generation in Armenia to live better than their parents," Libaridian says. "Then, if they have the means to do something more than we could do to gain recognition, let them do it. But give them that opportunity." Armenia's supporters in America should keep sending money—but in the political arena, they should step aside and allow Armenia's officials to develop economic relationships that will insure the country's stability, so that the era of tragedy that began with the genocide does not continue indefinitely, sustained by the age-old hatred that makes less and less sense as time goes on. The truth will no longer set anybody free. Armenia has suffered enough. ■

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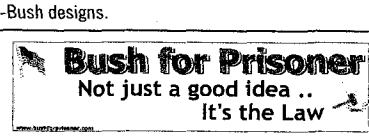

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MY CHILD IS AN HONOR STUDENT—BUT MY PRESIDENT IS A MORON bumpersticker plus cool t-shirts at: www.topplebush.com.

ORGANIZATIONS

GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA, "THE NATION IS US" discussion group forming. Connect to Lewwelge2@aol.com or (904) 398-2335.

BREVARD, NC, *NATION* DISCUSSION GROUP FORMING. E-mail Jim @ JKeenen@aol.com or Don at GAIA@citcom.net.

THE *NATION* DISCUSSION GROUP of the Inland Northwest is forming in the Cheney/Spokane area of eastern Washington. For information contact Gil Murray. Tel: (509) 235-1574; e-mail murraygil@aol.com.

ATTENTION BENELUX *NATION* READERS! Want your own *Nation* discussion group? Group to meet in Hasselt (Limburg), Belgium. For further information e-mail associates@thenation.com or write The Nation Associates, *The Nation*, 33 Irving Place, New York, NY 10003, USA.

POLICY

END THE DRUG WAR: See www.CommonSenseDrugPolicy.org, www.DrugWarFacts.org, www.DRCNet.org, www.MedicalMJ.org, www.DrugSense.org, www.AddictInTheFamily.org.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT The PERI Support Fund, which supports the work of the Political Economy Research Institute, a politically progressive economics think tank located at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is seeking a development director. PERI's mission is to undertake policy-relevant research and educational work in the areas of labor economics, macroeconomics, peace-building, development economics and the environment. The successful candidate will manage PERI's relationships with charitable foundations and private donors, and serve as the key fundraiser for underwriting PERI's research and educational programs. Candidates should have at least five years' experience in nonprofit fundraising or the equivalent, and possess excellent interpersonal, oral and written communication skills. The successful candidate does NOT need to live or work in Amherst, and salary will be competitive with the national market. Screening of applicants will begin immediately. Please send a letter of inquiry and résumé to: Director Search, PERI, Gordon Hall, 418 N. Pleasant St., Amherst, MA 10002, or e-mail peri@econs.umass.edu.

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EXECUTIVE VP ROCKRIDGE INSTITUTE, a progressive think tank, seeks person with strong background in finance, administration and start-ups. Fundraising and interpersonal skills critical. Position is currently half-time. Start: January 2005 or sooner. Submit electronically to jobs@rockridgeinstitute.org by September 10—cover letter, résumé and names of three references. RI plans other senior hires; applications will stay on file. RI, a project of the Tides Center, is an equal opportunity employer. We strongly encourage applications from women, people of color, including bilingual and bicultural individuals, and members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities.

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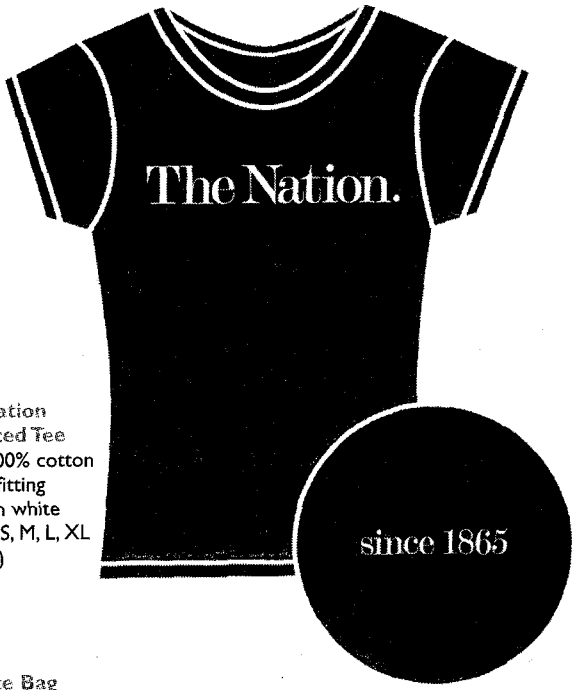
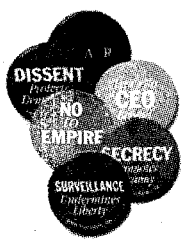


back

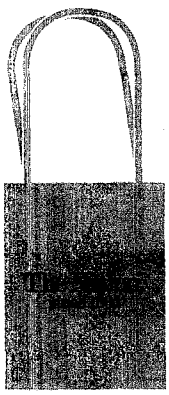
"Worry" Cover Tees or Posters
Original artwork by Brian Stauffer on union-made full-color 100% cotton tee or glossy 18" x 24" poster

"Block Bush" Cover Tees or Posters
Original artwork by John Carr on union-made full-color 100% cotton tee or glossy 18" x 24" poster

NEW! Nation Three-Button Set
(union-made)
"Worry," our famous cover, 1" x 1½" rectangular; "He Lied. They Died." 1¾" round; "Pinocchio" cover, 1¾" round



Nation Six-Button Set
(union-made)
A colorful collection, 1¼" round



NEW! The Nation Tote Bag
Lightweight, large cotton tote, imported, red with black lettering

NEW! The Nation Coffee Mug
Handsome 11 oz. mug, imported, white with red letters

NEW! Nation Seven-Button "W" Set
(union-made)
Six 1½" rounds and one 1¾"
Wear a matched set!

NEW! The Nation Women's Fitted Tee
Union-made, 100% cotton logo tee, form-fitting style, black with white lettering. Sizes: S, M, L, XL (they run small)

The Nation Soft Cap
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The Nation Short-Sleeve Tee
Our standard 100% cotton logo tee, union-made, black with white lettering.
Sizes: S, M, L, X, XX

NEW! The Nation Baby Tee
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Sizes: S (3–6 mo), M (6–12 mo), L (12–18 mo), XL (18–24 mo)

TEE SHIRTS (indicate quantity)

***The Nation* S-Sleeve Tee(s) @ $20**
Size: S___ M___ L___ X___ XX___

***The Nation* Women's Tee(s) @ $20**
Size: S___ M___ L___ XL___

***The Nation* Baby Tee(s) @ $15**
Size: 3–6 Mo___ 6–12 Mo___
12–18 Mo___ 18–24 Mo___

"Worry" S-Sleeve Tee(s) @ $20
Size: S___ M___ L___ X___ XX___

"Block Bush" S-Sleeve Tee(s) @ $20
Size: S___ M___ L___ X___ XX___

POSTERS (indicate quantity)

"Worry" Poster(s) @ $15.
"Block Bush" Poster(s) @ $15.

OTHER ITEMS (indicate quantity)

___ ***The Nation* Mug(s) @ $12**
___ ***The Nation* Soft Cap(s) @ $15**
___ ***The Nation* Tote(s) @ $10**
___ **Set of 6, Protest Buttons (Small) @ $10**
___ **"He Lied. They Died." button @ $5**
___ **"Pinocchio" Bush Cover button @ $5**
___ **"Worry" Bush Cover button @ $5**
___ **Set of 3 buttons above @ $10**
___ **Set of 7 "W" buttons @ $10**

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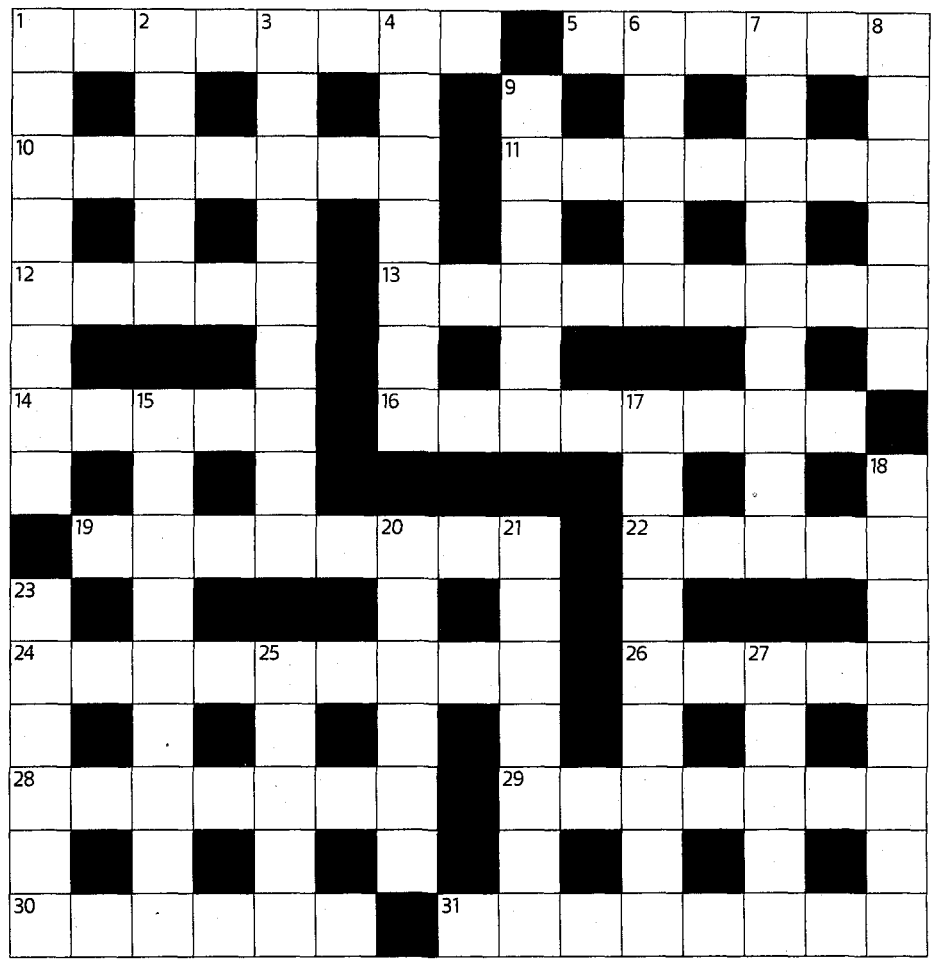
PUZZLE NO. 2954

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and **5** What are they used for? Follow the bouncing ball, and you'll evidently hear a slightly different sound on each side. (4-4,6)

10 One who taunts you with a birdlike sound? (7)

11 Supposedly the weather is bright and blue this time, and the ale brown. (7)

12 They may appreciate the dope supplied by devious ruses. (5)

13 Make too much of where the governor is placed? (9)

14 and **22** With this on the door, the sometime occupant should be taking things in. (3,2,5)

16 Put up with evildoing, and you'll see what a substitute does (6,2)

19 Small firms, but they have the sort of agent that makes them relatively close. (8)

22 See 14

24 An eel (that is, to a point) makes quite a collection of them! (9)

26 and **8** down What some people do with tobacco where the film shows—possibly in an effort to disguise true identity. (5,6)

28 With an IQ of 25 or so, I would shortly have what looks like 10 to shake. (7)

29 Press time long, long ago. (4,3)

30 Is it a necessary requirement with the French to tease people this way? (6)

31 They might be brought by someone at the soldier's chow hall, when sage dressing is added on. (8)

DOWN

1 and **23** Knocked down in the fight, but getting up—up with a tipster having nothing but a true statement when one gets on. (3,3,2,6)

2 Conceivably I've an alternative to being gullible. (5)

3 Where in New Jersey 6 might go on the short street leading up to the little city. (9)

4 and **20** It makes one a bit shaky to possibly set the sun over what a 10 does going to church. (7,6)

6 Puts something in the head of 3, when sent a bunch of problem letters. (5)

7 Harold Hill knew one by the name of Marian. (9)

8 See 26 across

9 A bit of poetry put in a crumpled bag at the "grocery store" for some people. (6)

15 What you might get stuck with over what a boy put his finger in, being a historian, educator or lexicographer. (9)

17 They might be of grandeur, though used lions to show it off. (9)

18 Like Longfellow's boy with cheeks of tan—or Joe! (8)

20 See 4 down

21 Little sister has a point, referring to the chapel that has pretty pictures. (7)

23 See 1 down

25 One's former spouse has a good deal coming up, as a way to give praise. (5)

27 Not quite all the fruit is for the animal! (5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 2953

P	R	E	A	D	O	L	E	S	C	E	N	C	E	
R		U		E		O		T		S		R		D
O	P	T	I	C	A	L		R	O	S	E	O	L	A
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	O	N	E	A	R	M	E	D	B	A	N	D	I	T

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—Business Week, July 2003

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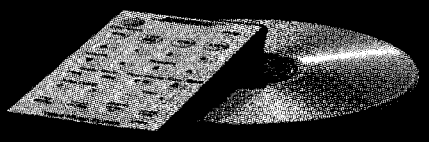

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